NANTVCKET SCRAPS

Jane G. Austin

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NANTUCKET SCRAPS

BEING THE EXPERIENCES OF AN OFF-ISLANDER,
IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON, AMONG
A PASSING PEOPLE

BY

JANE G. AUSTIN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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TO

FRIEND JAMES,

And Other Friends,

WHOSE KINDLINESS AND COURTESY MAKE MY MEMORIES
OF NANTUCKET BOTH JOYOUS AND
GRATEFUL.

BOSTON, November, 1882.

619350

CONTENTS.

Part I.

NANTUCKET IN SEASON.

Scrap		Page
I.	The Going to Nantucket	3
II.	The Being There	19
III.	Graveyards	34
IV.	Dionis	48
V.	The Lisbon Bell	62
VI.	Mrs. McCleve's Museum, the Windmill, and Newtown Burying-Ground	75
VII.	Friends	96
VIII.	"Lilian" and Seven Sharks	107
IX.	A Squantum	128
X.	Sconset	145
XI.	Sconset in Summer	166
XII.	The Coffins	183

Part II.

NANTUCKET OUT OF SEASON.

Scrap		Page
I.	The Summer Boarder	203
II.	Real Nantucket	216
III.	The Life-Saving Station	262
IV.	Sconset from the Inside. — Whales and Camels	272
V.	Voyaging under Perilous Circumstances	337

PART I.

NANTUCKET IN SEASON.

SCRAP I.

THE GOING TO NANTUCKET.

ON the tip of what would be the southerly shoulder of the cod if the Cape of that name were really shaped like the national fish, or what would be the southerly strap of the boot-leg if it were really shaped like a boot, lies the town of Falmouth, and on the extreme southerly tip and verge of Falmouth a knot of houses clusters around a pretty little landlocked basin of water; and those of us venerable enough to remember the "late unpleasantness" grew up to call hamlet and basin Wood's Hole. The wisdom of the later days has corrected this nomenclature into Wood's Holl, and avers that the Skeleton in Armor, after building the windmill-castle of Newport, annexed this little property as a sort of port of

entry, and called it in Scandinavian his Holl, or Hold. Whether his name was Wood, and therefore Wood's Holl, these revivalists have not yet stated. When they do, we shall know as much as the Pickwickians finally discovered about *their* Runic inscription; and meantime we may consider the whole matter relegated to the realm of æstheticism, and therefore not to be considered in the vulgar light of common-sense. Moreover, as the newspapers now print the name of this place Wood's Holl, it is at once removed from cavil or question.

Wood's Holl contains several things, but the one of general interest is a railway station occupying the head of a wharf, — for this station is the terminus of seventy miles of rail annexing Boston to Wood's Holl; and at this wharf arrive, at their own pleasure and with a large and noble disregard of fixed times, the steamers conveying persons over the thirty watery miles still intervening between Boston and Nantucket. It is with a secret and mysterious satisfaction that Nantucket always announces herself as lying just one hundred miles from Boston; and although the prosaic and anti-Oscar mind rebelliously demands statistics to convince it that the distance is not

ninety-seven, or one hundred and four, or even ninety-nine and three-quarters miles, — anything but that mystically rounded centigrade, — no proof is vouchsafed; and still Nantucket blandly smiles and says, —

"Just a hundred miles from here to Boston."

At Wood's Holl, in this station, and upon this wharf, arrived in the afternoon of a very hot day in early July, 1881, a party of tired, hungry, worn, and variously irate travellers. These conditions, incident to summer travel, were in this case aggravated by a detention of nearly three hours upon the road, the southward-bound train having encountered the wreck of a freight train laden with sand. The passengers were invited to make their election between being backed to Boston and trying it again next day, or dismounting, walking round the wreck, and waiting until a "picked-up" train could be put together to take them on. The passengers growled, but nearly unanimously cried "Excelsior!" and, grasping yet more firmly their bags, shawls, parasols, lunch-baskets, novels, papers, bouquets, and babies, trooped down the steps of the cars, and thence jumped or were lifted into a steep bank of red-hot sand shelving pre-

cipitately into a ditch happily pretty dry. Beyond the ditch lay the forest primeval, as tangly, damp, snaky, and uninviting as the forest primeval usually is; and thence issued, with clang of shardy wings and blast of war-trumpets and general onset of battle, the troops of beetles, black flies, and mosquitoes which lie in wait in the forest primeval for such prey as the gods deliver to their stings. The æsthete is invited here to consider the beautiful fitness of the train breaking down just at the stingers' door, and the occult adaptation of the sting to the man and the man to the sting, with the added harmony of the golden coreopsis growing in the ditch, — its flower like a sunflower, its seed like a bug, under which general title the American classes everything insectile.

"All things come round," says the poet, and the passengers were no exception, — *they* came round; and the first half found seats in the picked-up train, and the last did not, — or only that ideal seat upon the monument where Patience works out her perfect work. Mysie was one of the passengers, and she was one of the first half; whereat she was glad, preferring even a hard bench in a picked-up car to the best

monument ever occupied by Patience, — Mysie and Patience not being *simpatica*.

After a while, and a great while, the picked-up train was put in motion, probably by a hand-car, judging from the speed and jerky action, and such of the passengers as had lunch ate it, having left town at twelve o'clock, and consequently finding themselves quite "off with the old love" of breakfast by two o'clock. Those who had no lunch either looked enviously at those who had, or looked politely out of the window and pretended they did not know it was a question of lunch, or smelled and gazed at the coreopses they had gathered, and said in every line of their hungry faces, "This, oh this, is the food of the æsthetic soul!"

Again a while, and a great while, and the train arrived at Wood's Holl, and there found the "Island Home" puffing impatient steam from her funnels, and dancing up and down with the lively flow of the tide, evidently anxious to be off. The passengers were no less so, and as the luggage and freight were at that moment backing to Boston, there was nothing to delay the almost immediate satisfaction of this desire for a start.

Some few of those feeble sisters to whom pleasuring must be a woful penance dived at once into the ladies' cabin and lay down upon the benches around its side, the heels of one sister to the head of the next, the chain being marked off by little pails set along the floor. Two black yet sympathetic stewardesses were in attendance, and, like the crocodile in "Alice,"

> "Welcomed seasick strangers in
> With gently smiling jaws."

But as the sea was smooth and the wind nul, nearly everybody remained upon the deck, which was uncomfortably crowded until the boat stopped at Oak Bluffs, when about four fifths of the passengers disembarked.

Mysie, who with the selfish acumen of an old traveller had secured one of the best seats upon deck before the crowd perceived there were more sitters than seats, laid down the "Divina Commedia," which she had been reading, and, contemplating all the stream of people going ashore and the shore to which they were going, felt her mind expanded with a new idea. Dante does not mention it, but undoubtedly there is a circle in Paradise, a very big circle too, devoted

to the virtuous commonplace, — those who on earth find, if rich, the supreme joy of life in the shops of Paris, and if not rich, herd together in gregarious hilarity at Oak Bluffs!

Yes, such a Paradise must be, since these are worthy souls, giving the full tale of muslin and alpaca, cheese or sugar, toting up the ledger with unhesitating accuracy, and measuring the molasses in an honest quart; but as everything has two ends, one man's bliss being another's bale, and this one's meat the other's poison, and as in the divine economy almost everything may be usefully employed in various directions, why should not this paradise of the commonplace be also the purgatory or even the inferno of the æsthetic? To be condemned through infinite ages to live in a small wooden house open in front, rear, and on both sides to the eyes, ears, and tongues of the good and happy grocer and his family, to never feel the sense of utter stillness and loneliness soothe one's jaded nerves, to never be able to delude one's self with the idea that possibly nobody ever sat upon this rock and looked at just this bit of nature before! — tell me, O æsthete, would Dis be more horrible?

Still revolving these meek and charitable fancies, Mysie was glad to hear the wheels of the "Island Home" begin also to revolve, and she watched the shores of Martha's Vineyard, modestly veiling themselves in blue illusion, gently withdraw into the obscurity, until, as the sun entered his evening pavilion of purple and gold, the only visible impertinence offered by man to Nature was the creaking and hissing boat and its freight of peanut-eaters. In the lovely dusk of the summer evening, the shores of Nantucket defined themselves with a stillness and dignity most comforting after the clamor of Oak Bluffs. The town — and it is so pretty of it not to call itself a city — lies along the western and southern shores of a sheltered basin called the inner harbor, in distinction to the great outer harbor or roadstead, outside the sheltering arm, some six miles in length, stretched out from the head of the island, and reaching across nearly to another promontory about midway its length, called Brant Point, — thus inclosing a large sheet of water, whereon the timid or seasick yachtist may disport fearlessly in the roughest weather. The comparatively narrow entrance to this harbor is complicated by a sand-bar, whereon many

gallant ships have come to grief, either fatal or transitory, and whereon the steamers occasionally stick for a little while if they chance to arrive at low tide, — involving a small excitement not charged extra in the passage-money. Guarding the most objectionable point of this sand-bar is a bell-buoy, whose faint note of warning, creeping through the fog or storm of a dark day, is one of the most melancholy sounds imaginable, — a sort of maritime whip-poor-will; and this reminds one to notice how few birds inhabit Nantucket, they having probably gone off with the trees which once covered the island, and are now extinct. The inhabitants, however, aver that there were more birds during the last summer than for many previous years; and this may be because vegetation is also on the increase, the moors becoming more floral year by year. As for trees, they do not yet thrive: some public-spirited individuals have tried to replace the indigenous growth with pitchpine and other varieties of evergreens; but, like the trees in Amphion's neighbor's garden, —

> "Though fed with careful dirt,
> The poor things look unhappy."

This is a digression; and it is well to warn the

reader in the beginning that this is to be a book of digressions, following the order of events in Mysie's sojourn at Nantucket, — that order being of the order of flight pursued by the dragon-flies above a pool, who in the lazy summer noons give the only touch of motion to the landscape by their frantic, zigzag darting hither and yon, yet never reach any point beyond the sleepy little pool which smiles to itself at the busy idlers above.

The steamer, hugging the shore, which all around Nantucket shelves steeply to the sub-aqueous depths, glides around Brant Point, allowing the passengers to sun themselves in the eyes of the Bug-light keeper, — who might by a little exertion shake hands with the pilot, — and rounds up to the wharf built or elongated for her accommodation. And here let the philosophic tourist pause to make a study of the wharves of Nantucket, remembering that the wharves of a maritime place, like the front-door of a house, the hat of a man, the index of a book, are infallible telltales of the prosperity or interests beyond. But please to observe that "interests" is not identical with interest here, for the new smug pier, still smelling of cement, and with

offensively square and unworn piles, and smart black chains innocent of rust or barnacle, is not nearly as interesting as the creaking old wooden wharf, gapped all around like an old man's teeth, and with half its boarding gone or loose, so that one feels, with a delicious thrill, that to stray down here on a dark night might end the genteel comedy of life with a bit of tragedy. The gray old wharves of Newburyport, of Salem, of Plymouth, of the melancholy Southern ports, of many another quaint bygone place are dear to some of us, — dear as nothing of to-day could possibly be; but probably, in the calm light of reason, the wharves of Jersey City and Oak Bluffs are more indicative of commercial prosperity and the presence of the almighty dollar. Some of us love the dust of centuries, some of us love the almighty dollar; and as only twenty miles of water lie between Nantucket and Oak Bluffs, we may all be satisfied almost simultaneously.

On the especial evening alluded to, the "Island Home" rounded up to the restored yet venerable wharf assigned her, and after less delay than usual, owing to the absence of luggage, ran out her gang-plank, and allowed her passengers to land. Mysie tucked the "Inferno" under her

arm, and landed among the rest, looking about her with the slightly piqued interest attaching to the arrival in an absolutely new locality, reported to have features of novelty. The first one appeared in the shape of a mild and mannerly hack-driver, who, leaving his passenger the possibility of refusal, requested rather than demanded employment, and in a patient and paternal manner tried to induce her to give up her checks, — receiving the information that the baggage had not come as one receives a child's mistaken notions as to the revolutions of the earth. Mysie cut the matter short by getting into his carriage and looking out of the opposite window; whereupon the fatherly hackman went away to look up the baggage without a check, and having probably learned the truth from some masculine intelligence, came quietly back, mounted his box, and drove leisurely up into town. The streets of Nantucket were once paved with cobble stones, very probably deposited there, in the glacial period, by some drifting iceberg caught upon the bar. Naturally, after this considerable interval, they are now somewhat uneven, and at occasional intervals are ground into powder by ages of use; still,

although this peculiarity makes driving through the streets a somewhat heroic process, causing those still in possession of their own teeth to congratulate themselves upon the fact, no right-minded person would wish to see these alluvial cobbles give place to any modern innovation whatever. One melancholy proof of the corruption of civilization to be noted in one's first observations of the town of Nantucket is the prevalence of concrete walks. True, the nature of the sandy soil is so unstable that before their appearance no man could prophesy of to-morrow that the sidewalk would still remain where he had left it at sunset; but this was the nature of Nantucket, and why should sinful man try to improve upon Nature? It is pleasing to perceive that Nature avenges herself by so shifting the foundations of the concrete walks that the surface is compelled to give way at intervals, leaving crevasses and archipelagoes, where little islets of concrete are surrounded by creeks of sand and *débris*, reminding one pleasantly of the footpaths among lava deposits in lands beyond the seas. Besides the cobbles and the concrete, one is impressed, in a first study of the streets of Nantucket, with their accidental character.

They are altogether devoid of the deliberate malice of the streets of a city starting out in life as a metropolis, and have a lovely flavor of Boston, as originally laid out by the cows of Mr. Blackstone and his immediate successors, in their rambles from Spring Lane to Cornhill, and round again to Milk Street, going home by way of Water Street, — although in those days the connection between Milk and Water was not as close as in these. This flavor of Boston topography is in fact foreshadowed in a sonnet printed in the "Transcript" some two years since, which might be here appropriately quoted: —

"BOSTON.

"Cobwebbed with tangled streets the old town lies, —
Streets like unravelled threads of loitering Fate,
Who, in sweet idlesse, o'er ways intricate
Spun carelessly a city's destinies.
Quaint peaked roofs, with Pilgrim histories,
Rise sharp athwart the sky: and Time's estate, —
The darkened window-pane (through which we wait
To catch a glimpse of far-off ghostly eyes),
The mildewed wall, the ivy old that shrouds
Church tower and gable high, the graveyard low,
With dates o'ergrown, 'tween haunts of hurrying crowds, —
These start, like phantoms from a long-ago,
To lure the stranger at the sea-girt gate,
As erst they lured in vision, idling Fate.

MARIE LEBARON."

Murmuring these lines to herself, Mysie arrived at her destination, a pleasant house in Pearl Street, where by-and-by she fell asleep, lulled by the rhythm of the far-off surf upon South Shore.

In closing this chapter, introductory to a cursory study of Nantucket, we may quote some verses from a poem in her honor, written by a child of the soil, and called "My Native Isle." They appear in a quaint little volume entitled "Seaweeds from the Shores of Nantucket," — a collection of indigenous poems by various pens, but all stamped with that passionate and half-defiant attachment to the writers' birthplace so characteristic of islanders, especially when the island is small, bleak, and naturally unattractive:

. . . . . .

"Whence sprung my Native Isle?

"Oh, was it severed from the shore
Of neighboring lands in days of yore
By strong volcanic shock?
Hurled into the Atlantic Main
A barren, sandy, dreary plain,
A bit without a rock?

"Perchance it floated from the North,
Issued from Zembla's regions forth
To find a kinder sky;

Perchance it may again set sail,
Propelled by Boreas' favoring gale,
The torrid zone to try.

"Hence all ye light fantastic schemes
Teeming with fancy's flimsy dreams,
No more my thoughts beguile!
It is not in your power to tell
What tossed it up on Ocean's swell,
Or whence my Native Isle.

"Undecked, unlovely as thou art,
A speck upon the world's great chart,
Thou art our native spot;
And, true to nature, still we love,
And by affection still we prove
Thy faults can be forgot.

"We know the grandest, loftiest pines
Have left to grace more genial climes,
Yet lovely plants here thrive;
The violet bland, the violet blue,
And violet of cerulean hue
Betoken spring 's alive.

"Thy fatal shores and sandy shoals,
Round which the foaming white-cap rolls,
All hopes of safety blast;
The pale, affrighted sailor eyes
The dangers that around thee rise,
And turns away aghast.

M. M."

SCRAP II.

THE BEING THERE.

THE first feature of Nantucket noticeable in the morning is the seven o'clock bell which noisily proclaims from the Unitarian steeple, or, as they call it, the "tower," that Nantucket may now sit down to breakfast, — it being taken for granted that all properly-minded people are up, dressed, and well on with the day's work by that time. Mysie claims to be a properly-minded person, but she is not matutinal in her tastes, and had not slept well amid her new surroundings; so she anathematized the seven o'clock bell with all the force of the feeble vocabulary permitted to her sex, but, still after the manner of her sex, obeyed its summons; and having made such a toilet as the absence of all luggage except the "Inferno" permitted, opened her window and viewed Nantucket by daylight. Yes, very cobbly, very concrete, very accidental; but very blue as to sky, very

odorous and verdant as to the garden below her windows, very crisp and sparkling as to atmosphere, very satisfactory in that nameless, invisible, but most tangible sympathetic greeting which some new scenes extend to one, and some others utterly fail of possessing or offering. To borrow once again a word not quite translatable, Mysie, looking in the eyes of Nantucket, found them *simpatica*, and went downstairs well pleased.

At the front-door stood two charming young girls, fresh and blithe as the morning, and instantly suggesting the Rose and Blanche of a certain novel one was quite sure they never could have read. Framed in the doorway of an inner room stood the handsome hostess with her baby in her arms, presenting the picture of mother and child so sanctified to Christian hearts by *the* Mother and Child. Beyond, sat a lovely old lady smiling welcome to the guest, who felt that here indeed were gathered the elements of a human bouquet, sweet and bright as the summer morning in whose radiance all looked their best.

Breakfast over, Rose and Blanche, who had been in Nantucket before, and knew the lairs of some of its biggest lions, offered to show

them to Mysie, who gladly accepted their blithe guidance.

"What would you like to see first?" inquired Blanche, the younger and more tireless of the two. "There is the museum with the sperm whale's jaw, and the bric-a-brac shops, and the wharves, and the bathing-houses, and the Unitarian bell out of a Portuguese convent, and the graveyards, and the mill, and Mrs. McCleve, and the old house on Uriah Gardner's Hill, and —"

"Please!" exclaimed Mysie, holding up her hands, "it is such an embarrassment of riches that I am overwhelmed. Let us begin where you left off, and go to the old house on somebody's hill."

"Uriah Gardner's," replied Blanche, casting a glance of scrutiny at Mysie's feet. "You want the very tallest shoes you have, for the sand is ankle-deep."

"I should say knee-deep," said Rose, meditatively. "And I think I will take my bath, if you are going up there."

"Perhaps you would rather bathe too, this morning," suggested Blanche to Mysie. "We can drive to Clean Shore for ten cents, or go

over in the 'Dauntless' with Captain Burdette for the same price."

"Thanks," replied Mysie, meditatively. "It seems to me, however, as I spent the most of yesterday floating over a watery grave, — nothing but a plank, you know, between me and eternity, — it would be an appropriate thing to go to see the land-graves to-day; not Alsatian, but domestic."

Blanche looked puzzled, but with a child's charming singleness of purpose inquired, "Do you mean you want to go to the graveyard?"

"Yes, my dear, although not to remain; and we will also go to the old house on Uriah Gardner's Hill, if it can be done in one excursion."

"Oh, yes, perfectly," replied the little maid, blithely, while Rose added, —

"And I will go to bathe; for I was at the old house yesterday, and it is an awfully hot walk."

So Mysie and her charming escort set bravely forth, soon leaving the concrete behind, and threading lanes and laney roads where old, old houses stood elbowing the street, or where shallow depressions in the thin, tough turf showed where homes had been and were no more. One

cause of these depressing depressions is a custom prevalent in Nantucket at one time of moving the houses no longer needed in the shrunken town over to the mainland, — not after the manner of a snail, who walks about with his house on his back, but more as the water-fowl brings twig by twig the framework of her future mansion to its appointed site. Does the exact reader inquire, "Why no longer needed?" The answer is the history of Nantucket; and this in its way is as full of romantic and melancholy interest as that of Acadia. Looking below the surface matter of detail, such as oil and religion, — there being no oil in Acadia, and no religion in Nantucket, — the great revolutionizing factors of the two histories remain the same; or, rather, all history is a kaleidoscope where the varying effects are produced by the identical dozen bits of broken glass. But although scraps of history may intrude among the other Nantucket scraps here collected, it will not be of malice prepense; so, turning back from the *via historica*, we will pass at once out of the end of the last street in Nantucket town into a Sahara of fathomless sand, beyond which rises a sharp bluff, breaking off toward the road in an acclivity, up the face

of which crawled a path, if so it might be called, and toward this path Blanche resolutely took her way, saying, —

"You don't mind climbing, I hope?"

"Oh, no; not in a good cause.

'They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil, and pain.'

But I hope it was n't so sandy," gasped Mysie, struggling over the edge, and planting her feet upon the turf as firmly as might be in the face of a wild sea-wind hurling sand and salt needle-points in her face and eyes. And here let us note another peculiarity of Nantucket: there are no land-breezes, simply because there is not land enough to make one. The island, lying thirty miles out at sea, and measuring from three to five or six miles in width, with no high land, is swept from shore to shore by whatever breezes blow; so that, as an invalid despondently remarked, to stay a summer on Nantucket was the same as making a sea-voyage, except that you never got anywhere or had any variety.

"Can you get through these bars, or shall I let them down?" asked Blanche, on whose fair cheek the sea-roses were blooming brightly.

"Was this the customary approach to the house when it was inhabited?" asked Mysie, overcoming the obstacle in a manner not necessary to specify.

"I dare say they had no fence in those days," replied Blanche, meditatively. "There! is n't it nice?"

Anything but nice in the nice adaptation of the word, for it was very much decayed and out of shape; but the nicest of nice, quite too altogether nice, in æsthetic jargon, for it was but a ghost of a house, with great holes in the roof, chasms in the chimney, no glass in the boarded windows, and all one angle so eaten away by the tooth of Time and the east wind that one might put one's finger through what had once been solid oak, and grasp at the mouldered heart of the old home.

On the front of the great stack of chimney filling the centre of the building, was traced with bricks a symbol commonly called a horse-shoe, intended to avert the attacks of witchcraft: some archæologists say it is the letter U (initial of Uriah), but the horse-shoe theory best suits the spirit of the place. In Acadia a man possessing faith enough to spend his substance and

labor in placing a protecting symbol upon his house would have chosen the Cross; but the salt wind sweeping Nantucket, in those early days when everybody believed in at least something beyond the end of his own nose, brought in only that dim phantom of superstition which broods over the waste of ocean, and infects the hearts of those who live amidst its vague solitudes; so that Mysie — not then, but after months of patiently studying the soul of Nantucket — knew that the man who placed that horse-shoe upon his chimney was an unhappy man; for he was born to believe, and Fate had placed him in this outpost of Puritan and Quaker negation where the uprooting of the old faiths, like the uprooting of the old oaks, has left only a sterile waste instead of a generous new growth. Poor Uriah (if that was his name)! How his horse-shoe makes one's heart ache by its mute appeal for protection to the Unknown God; and how one wonders that neither then nor now has any Paul been sent to interpret with resistless power the Eternal Mystery to those who smile at the horse-shoe, yet know not the Cross!

"You see that little window beside the front door?" asked Blanche, pointing to three panes

of glass set laterally at about seven feet from the ground.

"Yes. What an odd shape and position!"

"That was for the women to look out and see if the Indians were attacking the house. Do you know about Molly Gardner who lived here, and the Indian who dropped through the roof?"

"No; tell me all about it." And Mysie luxuriously seated herself on the short worn turf, compacted by the pressure of the hundreds of feet (so quiet now!) which in those two centuries had gone in and out over that sunken door-stone; and Blanche, wandering like a kitten around her, told the story, true perhaps, perhaps not, — for yet another peculiarity of Nantucket is its utter apathy with regard to its own legends, and the impossibility of verifying them. One hears a vague and careless story from one person; and painfully seeking to amplify and establish it from other sources, is generally met with an indulgent smile, and "Well, I don't know, I'm sure. Maybe it is so, but I don't seem to know. Perhaps Grandma So-and-so would." The student's manifest best course in such a dilemma as this is eclecticism; and if a mathematical conscience gives him trouble, let him reflect that

most history, from Herodotus to Taine, has been constructed on the same principle. So Blanche's blithe voice asserts, with no peradventure in its tones, —

"There was a girl named Mary Gardner, — some people say Molly, but I thought the Quakers never used nicknames nor calico; did they?"

"*Quien sabe?* It was a great while ago, little Blanche; and times change, and Quakers with them."

"Well, I 'll call her Molly, because I like it better myself. You see the Gardners were one of the old families, and the Coffins were another —"

"The F. F.s of Nantucket, so to speak," suggested Mysie.

"Yes, though there 's a lot more of them; did you ever hear the old verse?

"'The Rays and Russells coopers are,
The knowing Folgers lazy;
A lying Coleman very rare,
And scarce a learned Hussey.
The Coffins noisy, fractious, loud,
The silent Gardners plodding;
The Mitchells good, the Barkers proud,
The Macys eat the pudding.'

"There is another verse, but it is so very impolite to the Pinkhams that I did n't learn it."

"The omission does you credit, my child. So this is the Libro d'Oro of Nantucket," suggested Mysie. "And Molly Gardner?"

"Molly Gardner's father wanted her to marry Tristram Coffin — they always call it 'Trustum' when they tell the story, but it was really Tristram."

"And Molly was really Ysolde?"

"No, she did n't love him as Ysolde did that Tristram; in fact, she loved somebody else, — some 'off-islander,' as they call them: they used to say 'Coofs' in those days, and now they say 'strangers.' Do you know they always call going to the mainland 'going to the continent'? Well, Molly loved some stranger from the continent, — maybe some fisherman from Cape Cod, — and she didn't want to marry Trustum at all; but her father and mother made her, because of family reasons, — though they were Friends, and ought n't to have cared, you know, about money, and land, and things; ought they?"

"I suppose Friends were human in those days, and so in this case inhuman. How did Tristram feel?"

"Oh, he wanted very much to marry Molly, because he liked her; and finally he was going to sea on a long voyage, and he said if they would marry her to him he would go directly on board his ship, and leave her with her parents till he came home; but he wanted to make sure of her, you see."

"What a foolish Trustum! Well?"

"Well, all this while Father Gardner had been building this house to give Molly for her wedding present; and it was all done, and they agreed to have the wedding in it; and then Molly could be the mistress, though her mother would stay with her while her father went to sea, — they all went to sea in those days, you know; and the rooms in this house are all braced at the corners with oak knees, just like a ship's cabin; all their ideas came from ships and sea. Well, it was settled that way; and Trustum's ship was all ready, and the wedding afternoon came, and the Friends came up to marry them. Do you know how Friends marry?"

"They should n't marry at all."

"Why?"

"Because they should be lovers, not friends."

"Oh, well, I mean Quakers, you know. They just say they want to marry, and will be good to each other, and all that; and then they sign a paper, and all their friends who are there sign it too, and that is all. They don't have a minister or anything."

"God forgive them!" said Mysie, fervently. "Well?"

"Well, the time came for Molly to get ready, and Molly was not to be found anywhere, high nor low, in the old house or the new, or anywhere; and there was the greatest time looking for her; and after a while they found her down by the shore, hiding among the rushes and tall grass, and her father brought her in at the back door, and there was her mother waiting for her; and of course she was awfully angry, but being a Friend she could n't scold, and all she said was,—

"'Molly Gardner, do thee go straight upstairs and put on thy calico gown and striped petticoat, and come down and be married.'

"Now what puzzles me is, being Quakers, how did she come to have a calico gown and striped petticoat?"

Blanche's forget-me-not eyes, demanding reply, drove away the image of that other girl,

pale, dishevelled, despairing, dragged from her poor refuge to a hateful marriage, — her desperate eyes yet looking down through all these years from the windows of that upper chamber whither she was sent to deck herself for the sacrifice, — and Mysie dreamily replied, —

"'Calico' in those days meant only the cotton fabrics of Calicut. It might have been dust-color and without figures; and the petticoat was perhaps linsey-woolsey striped in dust-and-ashes tints. Did she do it?"

"Yes; she went up and dressed herself, and came down and was married; and Tristram and all the company went away, and he sailed that night, and was gone three years, and then he came home, and they lived here. I hate to tell that part, but they always say she lived to be ninety years old, and had lots of children, and was a very hearty, healthy old woman."

"Poor thing, poor thing! That 's the saddest part of the story," murmured Mysie.

"'Over-live it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should I care?'"

"And the Indians who lived here then got cross with the white people, and one of them

made a hole in the roof and dropped down through to rob and murder the people; and Molly was all alone in the house, but she got away, and ran down to her father's, — and there is the hole in the roof this minute."

"Proof positive! Come, dear child, let us go to the graveyard," said Mysie, rising. For in fact the graveyard seemed just then less ghostly than Molly Gardner's old house.

SCRAP III.

GRAVEYARDS.

IN most idle and imaginative natures there is a certain ghoulish instinct which leads them to frequent graveyards, and find therein certain mysterious food, so satisfying to their appetites that if, in returning home, they are offered the good wholesome diet of Mrs. Jones's bonnet, or Mr. Brown's red nose, or the sweet thing in politics just out, they nibble at them as languidly as Amina at the rice, or perhaps are irritated into using the bodkin upon Sidi Nonman's face.

Nantucket to such a person offers extraordinary advantages; for there are several venerable graveyards wherein the oldest portions show neither monument nor mound, although the graveyard doors are metaphorically closed, every place being taken, and the audience waiting patiently for the trumpet-blast. Thus the imagination is left unusually free to spin its

subtile webs over the neglected grass, resembling tufts of dead men's withered hair; the crawling blackberry vines, whose briers clutch like dead women's fingers at one's garments as they trail past; and the thickets of alder and willow clustering mysteriously around a dank hollow at the back of the Old North, like mourners who know more than they ever will tell of the secret buried at their feet.

It was to the Old North that Blanche brought Mysie on this first morning, and showed her various quaint inscriptions, some of them thrilling with that mysterious pathos peculiar to death at sea. Prominent among these were three lonely graves almost lost in the riotous growths of vines and grasses, on one of whose sunken stones Mysie painfully deciphered —

Here lyes buried
Capt. THOMAS DELAP.
Son of Mr. JAMES DELAP and Mrs. MARY his wife.
He was cast a shore on Nantucket
Dec. y^e 6. 1771
And perisht in y Snow storm here.
Aged 26 years & 7 months.

Just think a little how Mary, wife of James Delap, felt when she heard of her boy perishing in the snowstorm on that December night. An-

other almost identical epitaph on the neighboring stone tells how Amos Otis, æt. 19, native of Cape Cod, shared the shipwreck and the death, as now the resting-place, of his youthful captain. The third stone says, —

THOMAS DAUS
Son of Mr. JONA and Mrs. SARAH DAUS
Departed this life at Sea Decembr y 13th 1763
in y Lat. 38 Deg. N. Long. 63 Deg. W. in y 19th year of his age.

And whether Daus means Davis or Daws is a question for the Recording Angel to answer, since nobody else seems to know.

These three graves had a peculiar fascination for Mysie; and many a time while summer lasted, and again when late November keened shrilly above the gray stones and prostrate herbage, she sat beside them wondering whether, when the sea gives up its own, Thomas Daus will feel any ownership in this his memorial stone, and why Amos Otis was not carried back to Cape Cod, and what were the incidents of that shipwreck and the snow-storm so memorable as to need no further description than " y Snow storm."

" See my roses! " cried little Blanche, skip-

ping across Amos Otis, and presenting a great bunch of blossoms tinted like her own cheeks. "They are deeper colored and thicker petalled here than anywhere else."

"They are vampires, colored and nourished by human lives," said Mysie, eying the roses askance; at which Blanche, tinkling out her pretty girl-laugh, cried,—

"Perhaps then you won't eat the blackberries when they come along! Don't you see all the vines? In August they are covered with great plump blackberries, perfectly delicious ones; and you never can tell at the table, you know, whether they were picked in the graveyard or not."

"You dreadful little ghoul! But both the roses and blackberries seem to grow principally in that great bare space in the middle of the ground. Nearly all the graves are beyond it, and these few are on this side of it."

"Oh, it 's all graves. Papa found out last summer all about it. The first settlers didn't believe in grave-stones, perhaps because they had n't any, and could n't very well get any; and perhaps because they had n't any churches or ministers, and did n't care much about religion, and so — just buried their friends, and that was

all about it. Then the Quakers don't allow any stones put up; and perhaps at first they buried here before they had a place of their own, and the bad example hurt the others. At any rate, all this middle space is just packed close with graves; and that's what makes all these little hollows where the vines grow so thick and strong. They're all old Nantucketers, dead and gone, and forgotten."

The roses, and the blithe young voice, and the sweet strong air sweeping in from seaward, made a gracious melody in the summer morning; but through it sobbed, like a minor strain, those words, — the knell of lives so sadly human, — "Dead, and gone, and forgotten!"

"Come over and see the Gardners," pursued the child. "You know this is sometimes called the Gardner Burying-ground, — for I believe they started it for themselves originally, and then the North Church adopted it. Then the Gardners were always marrying the Coffins, and about half the stones announce that fact, like this one: you see Mercy Ann was wife of Seth Coffin and daughter of Amariah Gardner; and next door is Rebecca, wife of Obed Gardner and daughter of Peter Coffin. Now see the

long row at the back there, just solid Gardners; is n't it nice?"

"Oh, very nice," replied Mysie, laughing, as she struggled through briers and knee-deep tangled grass, and all sorts of lawless growths, to read the brief yet so suggestive records of lives, each one with its own story, — its triple story of a soul as it knew itself, as men knew it, as God knew it. A graveyard is so like an index, — but the book is out of reach. Coming back from the Gardner corner, the friends strayed around among the gray old stones, painfully deciphering beneath lichen and mould the epitaphs, which Mysie after a while discovered bore one painful likeness, — they were eminently without faith and without hope: the mere wail of desolation from mourners feeling themselves eternally bereaved, or else the stoical confession of defeat. Prominent in the latter class was this of a young man:

"When soul and body did unite
In me my parents took delight
The scene is changed the seperation made,
And I am numbered with the dead.
Now young and old may plainly see
Yt youth was no defence to me,
For deaths dread call we must obey
And mingle with our parent clay."

Another, of a wife aged twenty-nine: —

"The old must die and leave the stage
The young may die you see,
But I was called in middle age,
Prepare to follow me."

Again: —

"My years are scarcely twenty eight
As you may plainly see;
Stoop down my friends, and weep for joy,
For you must lye with me."

Contrast these with two or three in the old burying-ground of Provincetown, the tip of Cape Cod: —

"Depart my friends, dry up your tears
I must lye here till Christ appears."

And here is one reminding us of Pope Gregory's exclamation when he saw the captive British children in Rome. "Angles!" quoth he; "they should rather be called angels."

"Two more little angles
Gone to Heaven."

Another from Provincetown is, —

"Here lyes ye body of a blooming youth
His dying expressions were goodness and truth
His weeping friends around hearing him say
Come my sweet Lord and take me away."

And this, by way of consolation to a widower:

"The great Creator wise and trew
Has an undoubted right to reign
He made and lent her unto you
Till he should call for her again."

Another widower makes his own confession of faith thus: —

"As I passed by with grief I see
That my dear wife is taken from me
Taken by One that had a right —
Thank God to Heaven she took her flight."

Provincetown can perhaps claim no superiority of diction or poetic afflatus, but it has that faith which is able to move mountains of ignorance and dulness. Let us not, however, be too severe on the lack of faith in Nantucket, for in a graveyard of Newton, close to Boston, stands a stone bearing this heathen inscription: —

"Beneath this stone our little boys
Our hopes, our comforts and our joys
Down to the tomb they now have gone
And left their parents here to mourn.
Down to the grave they now have gone
While in the days of youthful morn
Tears from our eyes how free they flow
Our little boys we see no more.
Beneath the ground on which we tread
Now they lie numbered with the dead."

In the Newton burying-ground is also this epitaph: —

"Sweet Babe!
He glanced into this world to see
A sample of our miserie.
He tasted of lifes bitter cup
Refus'd to drink the potion up
Then turn'd his little head aside
Disgusted with the taste, and died."

Enough of epitaphs, although there are many more, in each of these graveyards, following the school of those quoted; and also many of the conventional oddities rife in the last century, as, —

"Traveller pause as you pass by
As you are now, so once was I,
As I am now so you shall be,
Prepare to die and follow me."

Reminding one of Montgomery's melancholy lines: —

"Once in the course of ages past
There lived a man, and who was he?
Reader where e'er thy lot be cast
That man resembled thee!"

Over one very young married woman in the Gardner Burying-ground is placed, but without credit, rare Ben Jonson's famous and lovely epitaph: —

"Underneath this stone doth lie
As much beauty as could die;
Which in life did harbour give
To as much virtue as doth live."

The oldest certified grave upon the island stands alone upon a wind-swept hill near the site of the original town, then called Sherburne. It is said that the hill-side was once a graveyard; but the only visible proofs remaining are one stone with its legend quite obliterated, and another in tolerable preservation, stating, —

Here lyes ye body of
JOHN GARDNER
Who was born in ye year 1624 and died 1706 aged 82.

Town history states that this veteran bore the title of Captain; was a magistrate, and a worthy and honorable man. Private enterprise has within the year erected a rather pretentious monument, surrounded by an iron fence, close beside this grave, pointing out its antiquity and giving the names of several other worthies, contemporaries of Captain John, and very possibly buried in undiscernible graves around him; but although highly respectable, the monument strikes one as a little impertinent, and the effect of the two gray old stones decently crumbling

into dust on that lonely hill-side, with the sea — the same sea by which these men walked and toiled, and lived and died — whispering their story, and the midnight winds making moan over their graves, and the creeping grasses folding them ever closer and closer, — all these seem more harmonious alone, than with the addition of a big red-and-white and iron-fenced monument.

But Nantucket is proud of the monument, and it does not become her guests to be hyper-critical.

The most pathetic spot in Nantucket, however, is in the least interesting of her many burying-grounds; that is, the newest and most pretentious, abounding in heaps of barren gravel suggestive of unhealed wounds, in smart new monuments of white marble with gilt letters, in rusty and broken wooden fences, in attempted drive-ways and gravelled paths. But quite at the back of this melancholy cemetery, — for it scorns the name of graveyard or burying-ground, — lies a level parallelogram containing twenty-one graves, as close to each other as they can lie. They are chiefly the nameless crew of the ship "Newton" of Hamburg, wrecked off the South Shore on Christmas

Eve, 1865; and of all the twenty-seven men on board only one reached the shore alive. It snowed and blew furiously that night; and the sailors' wives and widows in Nantucket shivered by their firesides as they listened to the howling of the wind and the savage hammering of the surf on South Shore three miles away. They did not know all the horror of that night, however; for some time in its darkness one poor naked creature, cast ashore by those savage billows, crawled up out of their reach, and, fighting for life as only a strong man can fight, got to his feet and staggered on to find shelter and help. Naked, blinded by sleet and driving sand, exhausted, chilled, he fought on and on, falling now and again (for they found the scars he left on the cruel snow), and then up and on, until he came within sight of a farm-house; saw perhaps the fire-light and the cheerful flicker of the lantern as the farmer looked that his beasts were warm and safe, and then he fell, and rose no more — in this world.

Christmas Eve! When and how did that soul going out in agony and strife keep its Christmas day?

Go, you who find nothing more to interest

you in this worn-out world, — go to South Shore in November, and wandering off into the desolate moor sit down with only the wind and the sky for company, and picture to yourself that Christmas Eve and that soul and body fighting for life! The body was defeated, but perhaps the soul won a glorious victory.

The crew of the "Newton" do not lie alone in their nameless graves. That same Christmas Eve, the schooner "Haynes" from St. Domingo was wrecked on the western end of the island, with most unnecessary loss of life; for when the Humane Society's boat reached her, the vessel was unbroken, and the cabin warm, with a good fire in the stove; but the crew had taken to the boat, and all perished in the furious surf: the boat and oars with one dead body were found upon the beach, and other bodies were afterwards recovered. All the ministers of the island participated in the funeral rites over these poor relics; and although not one of the dead was known even by name to those who mourned him, the tie of common brotherhood, so sweet and dear at such a time, asserted itself; and many wept the cruel death, and some few prayed that all might still be well with those so suddenly

called within the vail. And this is but one of numberless stories of wreck, heroic effort, noble lives and noble deaths whose indices are to be found in the graveyards of Nantucket.

SCRAP IV.

DIONIS.

"MY dear, what horrible thing has happened?" exclaimed Mysie, clinging to Blanche's slender arm for protection, and staring at one of the many angles of the homeward road, around which a medley of sound came bearing down upon them, suggesting immediate and rapid flight. But Blanche's laugh was reassuring, and Mysie suffered herself to be led onward as she received the information, —

"Oh, that's only Billy,—Billy Clark, you know, —the town-crier, although I believe on the whole he cries on his private account and not for the town. Twice a day when the boat comes in he is down on the wharf, and before they really stop somebody throws him a bundle of newspapers, and he sets forth, reading scraps as he goes, and then crying the news as he understands it. Sometimes he makes rather droll mistakes, — as, for instance, when he announced, 'Great

battle at Molasses Junction! Meat auction this evening!' But I'm sure we should do worse if we tried to blow a horn, and ring a bell, and read the newspaper, and cry the news, and walk like a steam-engine all at once, should n't we?"

"Indeed we should," fervently replied Mysie. "So that dreadful bray is a horn, is it?"

"Yes; a great big one, like what the angels on the steeple of that church in Boston have. You 'll see it in a minute, and then a great bell like a hotel dinner-bell; and the rest is his voice."

"Oh, his voice, is it? I did n't think of a voice exactly," said Mysie, meditatively.

"Well, you see," replied Blanche in an apologetic tone, "he was very much excited in the time of the war; and there was a good deal of news, and he cried too much and too loud, and 'sort of wore out his voice,' as the Captain says. But he 's very nice and obliging; and though you can't tell a word he says when he cries, if you stop him and ask the news, he 'll tell you all about it in a voice just like anybody. And he knows everything about the shipping and all that; it is quite a mystery how he gets hold of it sometimes."

"I suppose he gives his entire mind to it, as

the young man in 'Punch' did to tying his cravat," suggested Mysie.

"I suppose he does," replied Blanche, placidly. "Anyway, he gives his entire time; for he watches up in the church tower noon and night until the boat appears in sight, sometimes just leaving the Vineyard, and then he gives a tremendous blast of his horn north, south, east, and west, just like those Back-Bay angels, you know; and so everybody knows the boat is coming, and most everybody goes down to see her come in. Then, too, he sees all the schooners or larger vessels that are coming in or going by, and he cries all that sort of information without getting anything for it. He always tells when the barges are coming with stone for the jetty they are building to protect the harbor; and when the first ones came into the harbor he shrieked all over town, 'The jetty's at the wharf! The jetty's at the wharf!' Then between the boats he cries announcements of meat auctions, and temperance lectures, and picnics at South Shore, and lady's pocket-handkerchiefs and bags and knitting-work strayed or stolen, or in fact anything anybody wants everybody else to know. Here he is."

And around the corner rushed a spare athletic

figure, "hasting by like a post who tarrieth not," yet finding time for a good-natured glance and nod, and then a roar no doubt kindly intended to carry a private revelation to the "women-folks," for whom Billy is said to entertain a special kindness, but which in this instance failed to convey any information to their uncultured ears.

"There 's the one o'clock bell," remarked Blanche. "You must go up the Unitarian steeple and see that bell some day; it has a story like everything else here. But dinner is ready, and I do believe there 's papa!"

The boat had brought an influx of visitors, including not only Blanche's papa and mamma, but the señor and señora, with several young people, to whose society Mysie felt that she must resign her blithe little comrade, comforting herself, however, in the air of fresh young life and buoyant merriment surrounding unspoiled and really *young* young people, becoming, alas! more the exception than the rule in American society and at American watering-places.

"Now let us begin to do something Nantuckety!" cried Harry, as the party rose from dinner

and swarmed out upon the porch, chattering all at once like a flock of blackbirds.

"Yes, let us go to South Shore, — to Surf Side, I mean," replied Blanche eagerly. "We have saved it till you came. Oh, papa, the engine is named "Dionis" after the first Tristram Coffin's wife; and when it whistles they say Dionis is shrieking at the invasion of Coofs."

"Coofs?" echoed Mysie, anxious to gather every crumb of Nantucket lore drifting past.

"Yes, that's our old Nantucket politeness toward strangers," remarked the señor, who after a score or so of years among the Spaniards had returned to visit his birth-place, with the appreciation only long exile gives. "Your Nantucketer of fifty years ago was a good deal like a Chinese map-maker, who draws a circle touching the four sides of his paper for China, and puts the rest of the world in the corners."

"Or like the boys of Marblehead of the same epoch, who, when a stranger appeared in town, cried, 'Hullo! here's a man! Let's rock him!'"

"Rock him in a cradle did they mean?" inquired Blanche, innocently.

"They meant, stone him; only they were such a vigorous set of urchins that nothing less than

rocks would serve them for missiles," explained her papa.

"But why Coofs?" persisted Mysie.

"*Quien sabe!*" exclaimed the señor, with an unconscious shrug of the shoulders and eyebrows. "It was a Nantucket word, that's all, and it has gone out of fashion; now they call their visitors strangers, or off-islanders,—just as in New York they call Jews Israelites after they get into Fifth Avenue."

"If we are going to Surf-side it is time to start," suggested Blanche. "Dionis shrieks at two."

"But the conductor takes a good look up Main Street before he steps aboard, and if any old lady is seen turning the corner he waits for her," laughed Rose.

"Suppose we three go on and tell them the rest are coming," suggested Harry, with elaborate carelessness.

"Run along if you like," said papa, good-naturedly.

"Improvements are not always betterments," said the señor to Mysie, who was rather wistfully watching the three young things tripping away so merrily. "In my day, the girls and I walked

all the way to South Shore instead of down to the dépôt. Three miles out and three back, and then we were ready to dance all night, and go fishing next morning."

"Each generation is more heroic in its enjoyments than the succeeding one," said Mysie, cynically. "Fifty years from now it will be sufficient for the young man to recline with a lily in his hand, while the girls read him poems about the sounding sea. It will be quite too fatiguing to go and look at it."

"Come, come, you two!" exclaimed the jovial papa, "the cakes and ale are not all gone yet; come on, and let us have our share."

So, over asphalt and cobble, past the museum where the sperm whale's jaw still patiently bided its time, and down the sunny Main Street streamed the gay party, until at the corner of a transverse street they came upon a vehicle very like an exaggerated open street-car, the seats almost filled with passengers, upon whose faces rested a nearly universal smile, — that shamefaced and yet expectant character of smile observable on the countenances of the people who adventure in the merry-go-round at a picnic, or who ride in the elephant's howdah at a circus,

or who honestly respond to the mesmerizer's call for subjects at a lecture: people, in fact, who wish to try a new amusement, but feel it to be both risky and ridiculous.

The old lady who, at the opening of the Fitchburg road, requested the conductor to "drive kind o' easy along at first," as she was n't sure she 'd like it, was probably not there; but her sisters, her cousins, and her aunts all were, and the family likeness was striking.

Rose, Blanche, and Harry had secured the rear seat as affording the best view of the country; and no sooner were the party placed than Dionis, uttering a dismal shriek, set off, amid peals of laughter from not only the passengers but the knot of spectators waiting about, as if a new whaler were to be launched. This good-humored merriment was in point of fact part of the rolling stock of the road, and extended through all classes of people concerned with it: the man who rang the bell always rang it as if he were firing a bunch of crackers under the schoolmaster's chair; the conductor announced the way stations of "Washington Street" and "Hooper's" with the genial smile of a man propounding a funny conundrum; and when on the return trip

he announced "Nantucket," it never failed to evoke a peal of laughter, in which he usually joined. On several occasions persons came running across the fields waving their hands to arrest the train, which never failed to stop and take them aboard; and once the conductor, with his hand on the string, called to some pedestrian friend, "Want to ride?" and looked quite grieved that the offer should be refused.

Past the deserted candle-works, the closed warehouses, the crumbling wharves, which tell of Nantucket's decadence as a whaling port, and out upon the beautiful moors not just here to be described, and on through the balmy yet invigorating southerly wind, until Dionis, with a scream of angry protest at not being allowed to carry her freight clear over the bluff and into the sea, stopped short, and the passengers clambering down made their way through piles of lumber, and past the two great barracks in building for skating rink and restaurant, to the edge of a steep bluff, below which boomed disdainfully the mighty sea, defying man to encroach by one little inch upon the domain he claims to-day, as he claimed it centuries and æons before man,

white or red, came to gaze upon his grandeur. A very noticeable feature of this shore, as of that at Sconset and all along the southern coast of Nantucket, is the loneliness of the sea view. No sail shimmers out from the deep blue of sky and water, no plume of smoke announces the passage of a steamer, no pleasure-boat dances over those stately and ponderous waves; the whole expanse, unlimited save for the limits of man's vision, and the curve of the little globe he inhabits, is as lonely to-day as on that when Columbus stood arguing the existence of a new world before the royalty of Spain. The reason given is twofold; this tract of water is out of the regular course of either outward bound or coasting vessels, and moreover it is so dangerous, with its sunken reefs, its strong currents, and its furious winds, that prudent navigators will avoid it when they can. It was off this South Shore that the "Newton" came to her end that Christmas Eve, when every man on board was lost; and here, too, it was that Thomas Delap and Amos Otis were "cast a-shore and perisht in y^e^ snowstorm there." And as one listens to the vivid réminiscences of some of the old people who have witnessed as many wrecks as they are years

old, or culls the information from scattering records and histories, one learns to look over this great field of stern and threatening waters with a feeling very different from that evoked by an ordinary summer sea, busy with human traffic, or gay with human pleasure.

Hector St. John, who visited Nantucket in 1782, and gives his impressions of it in a charming old book called "Letters of an American Farmer," speaks of this watery waste in these words: —

"This island, as has been already hinted, appears to be the summit of a huge sandy mountain affording some acres of dry land for the habitation of man; other submarine hills lie to the southward of this, at different depths and distances. This dangerous region is well known to mariners by the name of Nantucket Shoals. These are the bulwarks which so powerfully defend this island from the impulse of the mighty ocean, and repel the force of its waves, which but for the accumulated barriers would ere now have dissolved its foundations and torn it in pieces. These are the banks which afforded to the first inhabitants of Nantucket their daily subsistence, as it was from these shoals that they drew the origin of that wealth which they now possess, and was the school where they first learned to venture farther, as the fish of their coast receded."

From this point of view the "Rips," as these foam-covered banks are called, gain a new dignity; and it is quite true that they alone break the force of the wave starting from the shores of Africa and aiming at the destruction of Nantucket.

"Come downstairs and sit on the sands," cried Blanche, running back from the steps to where Mysie stood awe-stricken and silent before this majesty of loneliness. So down the wooden steps, whose base is often washed by the waves now rolling three or four hundred feet away, they went, and after strolling for a while through the fatiguing sand sat down upon shawls and gave themselves to the never-wearying fascination of watching the long waves roll in, comb over with the sunlight burnishing to gold the green concave of the glorious curve, and then break thunderously upon the sand, — the foam now and again rushing up to overwhelm some group of unwary loungers, who sprang laughing to their feet and scuttled ignominiously out of reach. One of Mysie's favorite occupations, both here and at Sconset, was to provide herself with shawls and a book, — Chinese, Sanscrit, or Aramaic answering just as well as English, — and

heaping a pillow of the sand recline luxuriously upon it, the book in her hand, and watch the waves roll in, comb over, break, and retreat, the ten thousandth one just as attractive as the first. She felt it then, and feels it now, to be a frivolous way of spending time, in fact not spending it at all, but just giving it away; and yet — and yet — perhaps on the whole those hours were as well spent as those of the ladies who with veils over their complexions seated themselves as soon as they reached the sands upon their camp-stools, and tatted or crocheted or ric-racked the golden hours away, looking up with vague smiles when some one exclaimed, "Oh, what a magnificent breaker!" and replying, "Elegant, is n't it? Three, four, five, six, — Mary, this does n't look right to me; did you bring the rule?" No doubt, however, the sea-air did them good.

Dionis makes her leisurely trips back and forth during every hour, except of course those when the officials are getting their dinner and tea, — for on Nantucket the idea of one man being served at the expense of another man's comfort or convenience has not yet superseded that notion of individual dignity and the

individual's right to himself and his time which is the quintessence of republicanism. The irruption of coofs with money in their pockets will no doubt soon corrupt this primitive nobility of character; but the present generation with their traditions must pass away completely, before a Nantucketer will stand cap in hand awaiting a patron's arrogant leisure.

SCRAP V.

THE LISBON BELL.

"SO many things to be done to-day!" cried Blanche next morning, running down the stairs and jumping off the last three, rather to her mamma's disapproval. "Bathing and sailing and fishing and going to Wauwinet, and perhaps to Sconset; and mamma wants to poke round in the bric-a-brac shops; and then there is Mrs. McCleve."

"What! Mrs. McCleve still one of the lions!" exclaimed the señor. "Well, well, I'm not so old as I thought I was. I'll go and see Auntie McCleve before I sleep again."

"Afternoon is the best time for that," suggested mamma; "just after dinner, instead of violent exercise. And, girls, you had better secure your bath first of all, and don't disappoint your papa of his sail; it does him so much good."

"And what will you do meanwhile, my dear?"

asked papa, reciprocating the interest and the smile.

"Oh, I will look up Miss Bettridge and her little stock of curios. She has always something odd and pretty in her tiny shop."

"And I will go with you," said the señora. "I don't feel like doing anything more active this morning."

"And I," said Mysie, "will go for a walk, and study Nantucket a little. Which way shall I go, Blanche?"

"Oh, won't you go with us? I wish you bathed. Won't you come and sail afterward?"

"No, my dear; I still feel excessively terrestrial, and had rather walk than do anything else."

"Then go and see the Portuguese bell, and the wind-mill, and old Captain John Gardner's gravestone out by the water-works; and there 's lots more burying-grounds."

"If I might offer my services as cicerone," suggested the señor, "I should enjoy reviving my own old memories of Nantucket; and I once knew a good deal about it in one way and another."

"Do you know where to get the key of the belfry?" shrewdly inquired Blanche.

The señor laughed, with his Spanish shrug: "Oh, if it is still the same blessed old lock I used to pick when I was a boy, I'll open it with my pocket-knife, or almost any key that comes handy. We used to go up there and tie cannon-crackers to the tongue of the bell, show lights out of the windows, daub phosphorus on the walls, — in fact what did n't we do? And there are so many dodge-holes in the old place we always managed to get off scot-free."

"That was the worst of it — for you," remarked the señora, sententiously.

"But there *is* a new lock," announced Blanche triumphantly. "Billy Clark told us about it, and how the boys plagued him when he went up to look out for the steamer, and to blow his horn north, south, east, and west to tell when she was coming; and so they got a real splendid new lock and put on just to please him, and he keeps the key, and nobody can go up without his leave."

"Ah!" exclaimed the señor not much disconcerted. "Well, Billy and I are old friends, and I am not afraid but we shall find entrance when you are ready, madame."

Billy proved amenable, and not only granted

the boon requested, but added that of his own society, leading the way up many steep and breathless stairs with a cat-like activity hard to emulate. The first flight led to a dim and unfinished chamber, where the two night watchmen alternate, one taking repose while the other in the belfry above gazes down upon the sleeping town, watching for the first appearance of fire, — an enemy justly dreaded by Nantucketers since the Great Fire, as it is respectfully styled, of July, 1846. There had, to be sure, been fires before in Nantucket, — a pretty big one in 1836; but this of ten years later was a disaster from which the old place will probably never recover, for it ate out the heart of the town, destroying most of the shops on Main Street, the principal private residences, and many of the oil factories and warehouses. Like that other great fire in London, — really not so disastrous judging by consequences as this, — another scourge came hand in hand with the conflagration; and the staggering trade and commerce of Nantucket received its death-blow in the destruction of the whaling interest. Aunt Julia, the sweet old lady of Mysie's temporary home, gave her a most vivid and touching description of the scene, — telling

how the shopkeepers brought out pieces of rich silk and satin to spread over their roofs and shop-fronts, thinking the floating flakes would not kindle upon them; and how the oil merchants rolled their casks of oil off the wharves into the water; and how the housewives, spreading down sheets upon the floor, emptied drawers and boxes into them, tied them in great budgets, and sent them out into the fields, — saving a good deal that was worthless, and leaving behind stores of old china brought from the East by the captains of those days, plate, furniture, and heirlooms of many sorts never to be replaced, not even the silks in the shops.

One phase of that night's experience must be given in Aunt Julia's own words, although the infinite pathos of the dear old voice and dim, far-gazing eyes is lost.

"Mother would n't leave the house for a long time; she said the fire would n't reach us, and it was n't until the roof was actually blazing that we could get her away. Then she was all in a hurry to go; but we were too confused to take the things we needed most, and all our old family silver was left behind except the little in the hand-basket which my sister caught up as we

left the house. I had made up a parcel of clothing and bedding, hoping some of the neighbors would put it in their carts; but nobody came, and the house was burning over our heads, and we went and left it. It was so noisy and rough in the streets that we turned off toward the cliffs; and when we were well out of town we all three sat down close together and looked back at our home. It seemed as if the very sky and ground and even the water were on fire, and I for one could n't feel as if I ever had lived in such a place, or ever could again. Toward morning it turned chilly, and mother shivered a good deal; but we had nothing to put over her, and at last my sister said, 'Come, there 's no use in staying here any longer: it is daylight now, let us go.' Then mother looked from one to the other of us and said, 'Girls, where have we to go to? We have no place belonging to us anywhere!' I had n't really taken it in before, and I don't believe my sister had either; and we just clung together and cried as I never have cried since. But God raised us up friends, and it was wonderful to see how everybody felt that what they had saved was to be shared with those who had nothing left. Everybody in Nantucket slept under a

roof next night, though there were a great many more heads than roofs."

Rather a long digression this time, but how could you understand the significance of that watchman's nest in the Unitarian steeple if you had not heard of the Great Fire; and the only pity is that one must not pause to insert the vivid accounts of that night drawn from other lips as well. But the señor and Billy have ascended another flight of stairs, and are found gazing with melancholy interest through the plate-glass panels of a locked door, behind which, on a long low table (well, it did remind one forcibly of a morgue), was displayed the interior economy of the clock, whose four faces keep Nantucket *au courant* of Nantucket time. It is not anybody else's time to be sure, not even the sun's; and it is an unfailing subject of conversation among the off-islanders to compare watches and discuss differences between themselves, and between everybody, and the clock. But it is a very fine clock, and pursues its own course with a good-humored unconcern as to anybody else's course eminently Nantuckety. Mournfully and respectfully turning away from the plate-glass window, the three aëronauts clambered up yet

another stair and found themselves in presence of the Bell.

We differ so widely, we human atoms, in our sympathies with inanimate objects! One man is profoundly affected at sight of a steam-engine, another at a ship, or a cathedral, or a dinner; another brightens up in view of a library, or a museum, or a lot of dreadful things from Cyprus; some persons, as in the trio under discussion, gaze with wistful interest into the bowels of a clock, and some find themselves subtilely drawn toward bells. And this last is not a fancy to be ashamed of, since poets have made bells the theme of many of their most thrilling songs, and artists have expended some of their subtilest strokes in illustrating them; and who among us ever went to a school exhibition, or a rural lyceum, that we did not hear "THE SONG OF THE BELLS" declaimed with varying degrees of excellence? All bells, in fact, are good and interesting, except that of a knife-grinder, and that is probably only the perversion of good; but this bell in the south steeple of Nantucket is the best thing on the island — well, among inanimate objects! It was cast in Lisbon in the year 1810, and was one of a chime of six in-

tended for a convent, its peculiar tone the B, although some critics rank it as A. The chime completed was tried, as carillons always are before being consecrated; and Captain Charles Clasby, standing by, was moved with the desire to snatch this special pleiad from the sweet galaxy and make it his own. Whether Jose Domingues da Costa happened that day to be "making up a little amount," and needed Clasby's dollars more than he needed the B-bell of his chime, we know not, nor does history tell how many of said dollars went to the bargain; but dollars conquered, and the bell, inscription and all, became the property of Captain Clasby, who, being himself bound to the North or South Pole after sperm whale, sent his prize home by Captain Thomas Cary, of the schooner "William and Mary." Wild rumors of romantic incidents connected with its arrival on the island assail at this point the seeker after truth, — one ancient mariner averring that it was wrecked and nearly lost on South Shore; another that it was smuggled ashore to avoid duties, and hidden in the cellar of Sam Cary's warehouse; while the neutral-tinted iconoclast, who revels in uprooting legends, declares

that it was soberly landed at a wharf, and stored in a cellar because it was too heavy to place on the floor of the store-house. At any rate, it was after a while bought by the parish of the South Church for $500.00, and hung in its present position in 1815. It was rung for the first time Dec. 18, 1815, in honor of the birth of the infant son of some island magnate, and one hardly knows whether to smile at the sarcasm upon itself Nantucket thus perpetrated, or to sigh compassionately over the record, that this bell, bearing the inscription it does, should have been rung December 18 in honor of the birth of a baby, and remain silent December 25, when all Christendom was rejoicing over the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. Mysie suggested this idea to one of the great men of Nantucket, and received the reply, —

"Well, I don't see that what happened in Judea a couple of thousand years ago has much to do with Nantucket."

And on reflection Mysie did not see that it had. The inscription set in raised letters above the quaintly ornamented rim of the bell runs thus:

"Ao bom JEZUS do Monte complétaõ seus vótos os devotos de Lisboa offerecendo Lhe hum completo

jogo de seis sinos para chamar os povos que adorão no seu sanctuario.

"José Domingues da Costa o fez em Lisboa, no anno de 1810."

Or in English: —

"To the Good Jesus of the Mountain the devout of Lisbon direct their prayers, offering Him a complete chime of six bells, to call the people to adore Him in His Sanctuary. Jose Domingues da Costa made it in the year 1810."

Mysie mused over this inscription and the memories and associations it evoked, until Billy, who with that fine courtesy natural to the uncorrupt American man in presence of a woman, had waited in patient silence through what must have seemed to him an absurd length of time, remarked, —

"She 's a going to strike twelve; and then they 'll ring the noon bell. You won't be scared, will you?"

More afraid of being deafened than scared, Mysie hastily withdrew down the ladder, and looking up from a safe distance saw as well as heard the ponderous clapper moved by the clock's works rise and fall, "with twelve great shocks of sound," and then the whole bell re-

volve, ringing out its sweet-toned call to weary artisans and "stalled" school-children and idle coofs, to come home and enjoy the noontide meal.

One item about the bell must not be forgotten. A "gentleman from Boston," charmed with its silvery tone, offered in the name of the famous Old South Church of that city, to buy it at the rate of one dollar per pound, the weight being 1,575 lbs. But he evidently did not know his Nantucket, to suppose money would buy what it valued as a peculiar possession; and when he stated that they had a very fine clock in the belfry of the Old South, but had unhappily cracked their bell, and would like to know at what price this one could be bought, Nantucket replied, that she had a very fine bell in her tower, but her clock was getting old, and she would like to know at what price the Old South clock could be bought!

However, after solacing her dignity with this retort, Nantucket gave the gentleman from Boston the address of Jose Domingues da Costa, of Lisbon, and the Old South soon had a very fine bell of her own; while in course of time one of the Starbucks, resident in New York, presented his native town with a clock costing a thousand

dollars, the same lying in state to-day behind the plate-glass windows of the morgue.

Close beside the bell is a ladder leading to the cupola, a small chamber surrounded with windows, from which may be had a most charming view not only of the town and its environs, but of nearly the whole island, with its setting of blue and sparkling ocean. In four of the windows, those facing the cardinal points, a round hole is neatly cut and framed about, to accommodate Billy Clark's spyglass, as he watches in cold or stormy weather for the shipping news, and also the angelic trumpet with which he announces his discoveries. Billy is a very respectable-looking person, but does not quite meet one's idea of Gabriel even as popularly represented; and yet as the trumpet flashed in the sunlight from the top of the church-steeple one could not but be reminded of

> "In de mornin', in de mornin'!
> When Gabriel blows his trumpet in de mornin'!"

SCRAP VI.

MRS. McCLEVE'S MUSEUM, THE WINDMILL, AND NEWTOWN BURYING-GROUND.

IN accordance with the sensible suggestion of the mamma, the drowsy hours of early afternoon were devoted to the museum, collected and exhibited by the public-spirited widow of a sea-captain named McCleve. An upper room of her comfortable house is devoted to the curios, although, like attar of roses, or some penetrating oils, they seem to have saturated the entire mansion,—the good-natured proprietress occasionally haling a favored guest away from the rest to look at some quaint picture, piece of china, or bit of furniture in her own private apartments. The party of twelve or fourteen collected on this especial afternoon were taken to the upper room and seated around a small table, as if for a spiritual *séance*, the hostess arranging precedence and proximity with an autocratic good

humor to which everybody yielded except the señor, who, standing looking in at the door, was presently accosted with —

"That gentleman at the door — why — I 've seen that face before! Don't you tell me it 's Sam!"

"No, I won't, Aunty McCleve, for you 'd be sure to contradict me if I did," replied the señor, coolly; whereupon Aunty shook him affectionately by the hand, assuring him he was the same "sarcy boy" he used to be, and dragged him most reluctantly to a seat in the magical circle.

"At what period of the entertainment do we pay?" inquired one of the persons one meets everywhere, and who may be called the whit-leather of society. Mrs. McCleve looked at him with an appreciative eye for a moment, and then quietly replied,—

"Well, it is n't often people bring it out quite so plain as that, but I guess *you 'd* better pay now before you forget it." Whit-leather does not suffer from sarcasm, and the practical man producing a quarter of a dollar, held it tight while asking,—

"Have you got ten cents change?"

"No, brother; but you can keep your quar-

ter till I have," replied Aunty, with the quiet gleam still in her eye, and the business was soon adjusted. This over, she placed upon the table a tray containing some really exquisite carvings in whale's-tooth ivory, comprising a set of napkin rings, thread-winders, spoons of various sizes, knife-handles, and several specimens of a utensil peculiar to Nantucket, called a jagging-knife, used for carving ornamental patterns in pastry,— a species of embroidery for which Nantucket housewives were once famous, although, " pity 'tis 'tis true," they have now largely emancipated themselves from such arts.

As the guests examined these really wonderful products of talent almost unaided by implements or training, one of the ladies naturally inquired, " Who did these?" The hostess assumed a sibylline attitude and tone: " Perhaps, my dear, you can tell us that; and if so, you 'll be the first one I ever met that could." This obscure intimation of course awakened an interest far deeper than the carvings, in every mind; and in reply to a shower of questioning the sibyl gave a long and intricate narration, beginning with the presence on board of her husband's whale-ship of a mystic youth with the manners

and bearing of Porphyrogenitus, and the rating of a common sailor; the delicate suggestion of a disguised lady was also dimly introduced. What succeeds is yet more wonderful, as Scheherezade always said when obliged to cut short the story that the Sultan might get up and say his prayers; but we will not invade Mrs. McCleve's copyright by telling it, simply advising every one to go and listen to it.

"Two, four, six, eight, ten — elev — en!" counted she at the end, picking up the napkin rings; "I don't seem to see that twelfth ring!" and she looked hard at the unfortunate who had acquired her dislike in the first of the interview by an unfeeling allusion to money.

"Here it is, Aunty," remarked the señor. "I wanted to hear you ask after it."

"Now, look at here, Sammy, you're too old for such tricks," expostulated the dame, in precisely the tone one admonishes a naughty child; and then turning to the company generally she added confidentially,—

"I aint one of them that's given to suspicion, and it aint a Nantucket failing; but last summer there was a boy, one of those half-grown critters, you know, neither beef nor veal, and I just saw

him pocket — well, it was that very knife-handle. I always kept an eye on it since, thinking it might be off yet. So I waited till I saw he actooally meant it, and was fixing to go off with it, and then says I,—

"'Well, sonny, going to unload before you start out on a new v'yge?' So that 's all about the carvings; and these are sharks' teeth, — none of your Wauwinet sand-sharks that would run away from a puppy-dog no bigger than that, but a reg'lar man-eater off the West Indies; and these very teeth took a man's leg off."

"Horrible!" cried one, while another, one of the persistent souls who must finish A before they begin B, inquired, "But did the boy give up the knife-handle?"

"Why, of course he did, my dear, since that 's it," replied the hostess compassionately; and then, with the inborn courtesy peculiar to Nantucket folk, turned aside the laugh that followed by hastily displaying some new marvel. The room was crowded with marine curiosities, many of them brought home by the deceased captain, many of them presented to his relict by his comrades or her own friends; they were mostly such as we have seen many times in many places, but

some few were *sui generis*, — such as a marriage contract between a Quaker bachelor and maid in the early days of the island, with the signatures of half the settlers appended as witnesses, mutual consent before others being the only ceremony required by the canon of these Nonsacramentarians. Then there was Phœbe-Ann's comb, a wonderful work of art in tortoise-shell; anent which the possessor, Phœbe-Ann's sister, delivered a short original poem, setting forth how ardently Phœbe-Ann had desired one of these immense combs, their price being eight dollars each; and how, having engaged it, she set to work to earn it by picking berries for sale; but before the pence had grown to the pounds the big comb was out of fashion, and poor Phœbe-Ann's hair, which had been wonderfully luxuriant, fell off through illness, and what remained was cut short. Nantucket probity would not, however, be off its bargain for such cause as this; and Phœbe-Ann paid her money and took her monumental comb, — more useful in its present connection, perhaps, than it could have been in any other. The crown and glory of Mrs. McCleve's museum, however, is a carved wooden vase, twelve or fourteen inches in height, made

from the top of one of the red-cedar posts planted a century or two since by this lady's ancestor, to inclose a certain parcel of land belonging to him. Twenty or thirty years ago the fence was to be renewed, and one of her cousins proposed to her to drive out to the place and secure a relic of the original island cedar now extinct. She accepted; and the section of post, sawed off with great exertion by the cousin, was turned and carved into its present shape in "Cousin Reuben Macy's shop on Orange Street."

But all this is set forth in an original poem delivered with much unction by its author, who decisively refuses a copy to any and everybody, and is even chary of letting any one listen to it more than once. It is original,— in fact, one may say, intensely original, — and quite as well worth listening to as the saga of a royal skald. It begins after this fashion: —

> "This vase, of which we have in contemplation,
> Merits, my friends, your careful observation.
> . . . . . .
> Saturday, the busiest day of all,
> From Cousin Thomas I received a call." —

Some lost couplets record the invitation to drive,

and the demur on account of pies then baking in the oven; but this being overruled by masculine persuasiveness, —

> "Across the hall I gayly skipped,
> And soon was for the cruise equipped."

Then follows the drive, the arrival, and the attempt to cut the stern old cedar trunk with a dull saw, —

> "Cousin Thomas worked with desperation,
> Until he was in a profuse perspiration,"

and finally secured the trophy here exhibited. But these stray couplets give a very inadequate idea of the poem as delivered by its author; and he who visits Nantucket and does not hear it has for the rest of his life a lost opportunity to lament.

Just at the close of the recital the poetess fixed her eye steadily upon a figure drooping beside one of the windows, and sternly inquired, —

"Is that woman sick? Why don't somebody see to her?"

It was true that the culprit, overcome by the heat of the room, the excitement of the narrative, and possibly certain ancient and fish-like odors connected with marine specimens, had

fainted a little; but was speedily recovered by the usual remedies, prominent among which in these days is a disinclination to have one's crimps spoiled by the application of water; and the incident was made memorable by the valedictory of the hostess: —

"Now if any of you want to come in again while you stay on the island you can, without paying anything; and if I don't remember you, just say, 'I was here the day the woman fainted,' and I shall know it's all right." And we heard that the experiment was tried and succeeded.

As the party left the house the señor lingered to say, "We are going up to the old windmill, Aunty. Didn't it belong to your family once?"

"I should say it did, Sammy. They wanted a windmill and did n't know how to make one; and they got an off-islander, name of Wilbur, to make it, and like fools gave him the money beforehand. He went back to the continent for something, — nails maybe, or maybe idees, — and carried the money with him; some pirate or other got wind of it, and the first they knew down here, the man was robbed and murdered there

on Cape Cod. That didn't put up a windmill though, and the women had got most tired grinding their samp and meal in those old stone mortars, or even a handmill; so some of the folks spoke to my grandfather Elisha Macy about it, and he thought it over, and finally went to bed and dreamed just how to build it, and next day got up and built it. That 's the story of *that*, my dear."

"A regular case of revelation, was n't it?" suggested the señor with a twinkle in his eye; to which the hostess rather sharply replied, —

"I don't profess to know much about revealation, and I don't surmise you know much more, Sammy; but that 's how the windmill was built."

History adds another anecdote of the windmill, worthy to be preserved for its Nantuckety flavor. Eighty-two years from its marvellous inception, the mill had grown so old and infirm that its owners concluded to sell it for lumber if need be. A meeting was called, and Jared Gardner, the man who was supposed to be wisest in mills of any on the island, was invited to attend, and succinctly asked by Sylvanus Macy, —

"Jared, what will thee give for the mill without the stones?"

"Not one penny, Sylvanus," replied Jared as succinctly; and the other, —

"What will thee give for it as it stands, Jared?"

"I don't feel to want it at any price, friend," replied Jared indifferently.

The mill-owners consulted, and presently returned to the charge with, —

"Jared, thee must make us an offer."

"Well, then, twenty dollars for firewood, Sylvanus."

The offer was accepted immediately; and shrewd Jared did not burn his mill even to roast a sucking pig, but repaired and used it to his own and his neighbors' advantage, until the day of his death.

These items of information were given by the señor, as he and Mysie picked their way up the broken hill upon whose crest the windmill stands, gray and venerable, — that is, as we of the New World count venerable. A crabbed old Portuguese named Juan Silva is miller now, and showed but scant civility to his guests, until he discovered that one of them had been on his native island, and could speak some phrases of its vernacular, when he thawed and became quite

genial. The outlook from the upper windows, like that from the bell-tower, shows all and more than all of the island framed in its rim of shining waters; and the massive oak-frame of the mill, growth of the primeval forest of Nantucket, has a certain charm of antiquity enhanced by the knowledge that no more oaks, no more cedars, no more men like those of old, will grow upon this little island for evermore.

"Do you see that graveyard on the rising land over there?" inquired the señor, pointing through the mill window; and Mysie replied, —

"How charmingly desolate it looks! Which is it?"

"The Old South, or the Newtown, as you please. There is one stone in it well worth another mile if you feel up to it."

"Allons!" responded Mysie; and, as they went, the señor related many an island tradition, or told the exploits of his own boyhood, with very much of the vague regret so pathetically hanging round that song of our dear dead singer, —

"For a boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

A solitary farm-house stands hard by the stile over which, living, one surmounts the graveyard wall; dead, one enters by the gate. In the door of this farm-house stood a comely young matron, arms a-kimbo, who called to the pedestrians with a friendly nod, —

"Wind 's shifting round to the nor'ard, and we 'll have a tempest before long; better not go too far beyond shelter."

"Thank you, neighbor," replied the señor, heartily. "If it comes on to storm we 'll make port here. Going to see Huldah Snow."

"Yes?— well, she 's there, I guess," replied the other a little cynically, for Nantucket does not prize its own treasures as strangers do, and is not much given to meditations in graveyards, or indeed anywhere else.

So, over the stile and down knee-deep into the rank, dry grass beyond, and presently the two stood before a melancholy white stone all awry, whose record Mysie copied verbatim, as thus:

HULDAH, WIFE OF BENJAMIN SNOW.
Died Jan 29, 1855, aged 62.

However dear She was not laid here
Some private grief was her disease
Laid to the North her friends to please.

"And now, what does it mean?" inquired she, as she finished writing.

"Well," said the señor, with a deprecatory shrug, "there was a little unpleasantness in the family, I believe; and Huldah's friends were rather bitter against Benjamin, translating the 'private grief' into 'incompatibility of temper' on his side. At any rate, they insisted that her remains should lie with those of her own people in the North Burying-ground, as they actually do, while Benjamin's sorrow found expression in this stone as you see,—thus securing the last word, contrary to the usual rule in quarrels between man and wife."

"Charming! Are there any more as good here?" asked Mysie, looking wistfully over the briery, wind-swept hillside.

"Not as good, perhaps; but see here,—

"In Memory of Sleeping Dust;"

and this,—

ALFRED G.
Died at Sea;

and this old stone, with everything scaled off its face except the hour-glass and the date, 1766. And one more over this way — yes, here it is:

Erected by a number of young men, friends of the deceased, to the memory of
SUSAN P.,
daughter of Zimri and Sarah Cleaveland, who was drowned in Madaket Harbour
July 24, 1849,
ÆT 24 years.

A great drop of rain plashed upon the note-book just on the word "drowned;" it may have been the materialized tear of one of those young men gone to rejoin the fair girl, whom one must fancy lovely, winning, and sweet beyond the common measure, to have drawn forth this memorial. But the rain-drop was a warning as well as a tribute, and, not to share the watery death of poor Susan, the explorers hastened through grass and briers, weeds and thorns, stumbling over stumps of crumbled away gravestones, and into hollows where what lay beneath had mouldered and sunken, until the stile was crossed, and the hospitable farm-house stood close at hand. But just then the drops ceased, swallowed in a long, cold sigh of wind, just such as might issue from an opened tomb, and Mysie proposed hastening on, and only seeking shelter when driven to do so.

"Very well," said the señor, "we will go home

through Guinea, and I will introduce you to some of my particular friends there."

Half a mile or so was soon sped, and a low-hung cloud suddenly burst, dashing its bright drops into the faces of the voyagers with all the malicious fun of an Undine.

"Just in time!" cried the señor. "Here's Pompey's house."

A neat little painted cottage, with ground well tilled and not without ornament, lying pleasantly all around, and a comely young woman, dark of skin but Caucasian of feature, to open the door and smilingly bid the wayfarers enter. A pretty sitting-room opened into a great cheerful kitchen, neat as a bee-hive, and Pompey's wife, untying her checked apron, threw it upon a chair; but presently, at the frank request of the señor, resumed both it and the pan of peas she was shelling, while replying modestly, yet with a certain free-born self-respect, to the questions of her visitor, whose name she knew very well, although she had grown up since he left the island.

"And your husband is Sampson Pompey, who used to go out fishing and shooting with me?" asked the señor. "Many an hour we've lain as close as any two of those peas in the pod, over

there in Pocomo Harbor, waiting for the wild fowl."

"Yes, there used to be a great many geese there," said Mrs. Pompey, quite innocently; and the señor, with a dry little smile, replied meditatively, —

"Yes, plenty of geese, and plenty of ducks, too, when I was a lad here; but all gone now, I dare say."

Then he began asking questions out of a very retentive memory, about the relatives, friends, and acquaintances of this young woman; and it appeared that she and half-a-dozen other girls of her own nationality had graduated with honor from the High School, — one of them now teaching an advanced public school in New Orleans; another bearing away from several active white competitors a diploma answering to the "double-first" of an English college, and, as Mrs. Pompey rather despondently said, —

"Most any of them better worth while than me."

"How many children did you say you had?" asked the señor.

"Two, sir; boys, both of 'em."

"Then the great Napoleon would have ranked

you above any one of those school-ma'ams and bookkeepers."

"Is that so?" asked the young mother, with a smile showing the most perfect of teeth and brightest of eyes.

Undine had passed by, and as the explorers fared on their way the señor gave many interesting details of the African occupancy of Nantucket, — once large, now dwindling rapidly, partly from the abolition of slavery, partly from the dearth of occupation for any sort of laborers. As in most places, the negroes of Nantucket are religious in their own fervid fashion, and there have been several Bethels and Zions devoted to their worship; but these have shrunken to one, presided over by a remarkable man, with whom Mysie had subsequently some acquaintance. All that she saw and all that she heard tended to solidify a conviction long forming in her mind, that the African, but more especially the man of mixed race, can be cultivated and encouraged up to a certain point just as successfully as the Caucasian; and that both the one and the other are apt to live up or down to the standard set for them by their associates. Intelligent and even benevolent persons, who judge the negro by the

specimens found in their peculiar haunts in large cities, dispose of him very briefly, as "dirty, lying, immoral, lazy," etc.; but if these persons will conscientiously seek out an equal number of Celtic or even Anglo-Saxon or native American specimens of the same social grade, the same education, occupations, examples, and teaching, it is our impression that they will find the above named vices as fully developed as in the African, with the addition of drunkenness and ruffianism, vices not constitutionally African.

On the other hand, take negroes and place them, as on Nantucket, among a simple, truly charitable people, where they will be treated and trained precisely as if they wore white skins, or rather without any reference to their skins, and they will at any rate in the second and third generations be in every respect equal to their white associates.

Whether more expanded modes of treatment and a longer time might develop higher capacities, and whether the soft and plastic ma terial could ever receive the polish of marble, are questions impossible to answer without experimental knowledge.

This theory was confirmed by a flying call,

made during the next shower, upon one of Mrs. Pompey's neighbors, pure Anglo-Saxon of blood, but neither so intelligent, educated, nor courteous as that young woman, while the house was quite lacking in the air of cheerful well-being characteristic of Pompey's cottage.

The showers now settled into a steady downpour and the señor exclaimed, —

"Stress of weather excuses all informality; so we will make port here, and I will give you a glimpse of a first-class Nantucket home."

Mysie opened her mouth to object, but the rain closed it again before she could speak, and the señor leading the way through a pretty little flower-garden, opened a door and walked in, calling aloud, —

"Harbor-master ahoy! Small fleet put in in distress!"

The hail was responded to by a voice at once maritime and cordial, and the Captain advanced with extended hand from the open door of the charming parlor, where presently his wife welcomed her informal visitors with gracious ease, entertained them as long as they would stay, and finally equipped them with wraps, shoes, and umbrellas as many as they would accept.

"Yes," said the señor, with a sigh, as they plashed along toward home, "that's the way everybody lived in Nantucket when the Captain and I were boys. Every door stood open, or at most latched, with the string hanging out; and every man, woman, and child felt a friendly interest in every other, and nobody was homeless or friendless, whatever happened to his own house or his own family. The Great Fire showed that. But they tell me things are changing fast."

"The Summer Boarder, with his wants and his money, has ruined other places than Nantucket," replied Mysie, ruefully. "I went to Mount Desert in 1864, and they timidly charged us three dollars per week for board; and we could sit for hours on Great Head, or by the Spouting Horn, without seeing a human face, or, which is perhaps worse, an egg-shell, a piece of buttery paper, or an empty claret bottle."

"You never will see it so again, I'm afraid," said the señor, blithely.

"No, nor you Nantucket, as it was when you were a boy," retorted Mysie.

SCRAP VII.

FRIENDS.

AS has been previously remarked, it is not everybody who likes Nantucket; not everybody who discovers its features of interest, or finds them interesting when pointed out. To really enjoy them when found, a certain amount of physical strength is requisite, and so is a pair of thick shoes, also a short dress, and a hat capable of being tied securely down; for the best of Nantucket is to be found by walking, sometimes actively,—as in the case of John Gardner's grave, or the cliff, or the burying-grounds, or the farm, now owned by a Mr. Smith, where Benjamin Franklin's mother lived as child and girl, and from whose spring she drew water, all unconscious of her posthumous fame. And sometimes the walk is of a prowling nature, through by-streets and lanes, where one pauses to talk a little over garden fences to rather reticent old folk, who will occasionally invite a "stranger" into their

houses still, and may perhaps after a while be coaxed into some slow, quaint old story with a Rip Van Winkle flavor to it.

Occasionally Mysie ventured to knock at an open door, or even at a closed one, and asking leave to sit and rest for a little, would slide into a gentle gossip with the inmates, usually finding any reserve or suspicion fade away as her genuine respect and sympathy for Nantucket folk became apparent. In only one instance was she treated with rudeness and inhospitality, and as that has been forgiven it shall be forgotten.

The professional bric-a-brac shops are not interesting, except to the freshest of novices in such merchandise; but occasionally one finds in houses, where to speak of purchase were an insult, a set or a piece of rare old India china, or carved furniture, or sometimes pictures. Two of these, seen by Mysie, were rich and dark old paintings, — one, evidently German, representing a handsome youth in an ermine mantle, probably the portrait of some petty prince; the other a powerful representation of Christ at the Pillar of Flagellation, so realistic that one longs to rescue it from its present position and place it in a church or convent. This picture has its history, al-

though its artist remains unknown, for it was rescued by a Nantucket sailor from the burning picture-gallery of an Italian seaport, becoming, in his mind, a piece of lawful salvage. He brought it home and presented it to a comrade, who subsequently sold it for two or three dollars; and it finally became the property of the worthy man at present owning and displaying it in his barber's shop. Prowling thus about the place, Mysie noticed her own surname upon the sign of a tin-shop, and went in; a dignified and venerable man came from the workshop at the rear, and meeting the stranger's eyes with a smile, but no form of salutation, inquired,—

"Does thee wish for some tinware?"

A small cup to carry upon excursions was the purchase first suggesting itself, and while negotiations of a very deliberate nature went on, Mysie mentioned the identity of name. The old man looked pleased and interested.

"Did thy people come from Nantucket?" inquired he. "Mine have lived here more than a century. We have a chart at home showing our history and connections; perhaps thee would like to look at it, if thee cares for such vanities."

"I do very much; but I did not suppose Friends did," suggested Mysie.

The kindly dark eyes of the old man gleamed over the top of his silver-bowed spectacles with a shrewd smile.

"Is thee much acquainted among Friends?" asked he.

"Not at all, I am sorry to say."

"When thee is, I think thee will find them much like other people, so far as human nature goes."

The acquaintance thus begun did not here finish; and in course of time Mysie was privileged to visit the pleasant home and the sweet saintly wife of this honored Friend, — a friend, but no relative, for the chart clearly tracing his genealogy did not include hers. Also she received the freedom of the workshop; and when no other visitor was there would most contentedly occupy the leathern arm-chair beside the open window, and watch the cutting and fashioning or repairing of vessels of tin and sheet-iron, while the patriarch and she exchanged views upon religious or social topics, agreeing better upon the latter than the former, where indeed they were as widely apart as two persons with

the same ultimate end in view could well be. On one of these occasions an individual dressed as a gentleman, evidently a stranger, came into the outer shop and loudly demanded a basin fit to bail out a boat with. The proprietor showed him two, — one with a handle, costing thirty cents; and one with no handle, priced at twenty-five cents.

"Oh, hang the one without a handle," remarked the customer, contemptuously pushing it aside.

"Thee can hang it if thee chooses; it has a ring for that purpose," replied the Friend, dryly.

The customer laughed boisterously, and seizing the other basin, said, —

"Come, I'll give you a quarter for this, and call it even."

"I think not, friend; the price of that is thirty cents," calmly replied the other, laying a firm hand upon it.

"But I have n't any money except a quarter; all I've got in the world," persisted the other.

"Really! Is thee so poor as that? Then I advise thee to take the cheaper dish," coolly retorted the Friend, casting a quick glance over the other's handsome yachting-suit.

"No getting round you, is there?" laughed the stranger, producing a handful of loose silver from his pocket and selecting thirty cents. The nobler man eyed the money and then its possessor.

"I thought thee said thee had only a quarter of a dollar in the world," said he, gravely. The man laughed a little awkwardly, but replied with an attempt at careless jocularity, —

"Oh, I was only fooling, you know; just talk!"

The steadfast gaze of those dark eyes through the silver-rimmed glasses must have been very hard to bear, for the sun-burned face of the recipient colored of a yet deeper red, and he was turning hastily away, but the Friend laying a detaining hand upon his shoulder, said very earnestly, —

"I think thee meant to convey a false impression, and that is worse than foolish, friend. I advise thee for thine own good to be more careful in future."

"All right, old man. If I said anything out of the way I take it all back," replied the yachtsman, throwing down the money and snatching up the dish; and in spite of the debonair style

of his departure one fancies he carried more than a tin basin out of that presence. Returning to the workshop, its master cast a smiling glance at Mysie, asking, —

"Did thee hear all that?"

"Yes. But he was n't a Nantucket man."

"No, he was n't a Nantucket man," said Friend James, meditatively. "But though we raise some honesty and truthfulness on Nantucket, we don't want to set up a monopoly of any of God's gifts."

Relating this anecdote to a friend, of Nantucket origin, he capped it with another: —

"When I was a boy, one of my ambitions was to play upon the fiddle; and I once went into Friend James's shop to procure a piece of rosin for the bow. He said he had some, and mounted a stool to find it upon an upper shelf. A small bit presented itself, and holding it down toward me he inquired, —

"'Is this large enough for thee, my son?'

"'Oh, yes,' replied I, incautiously; 'I only want to rosin my fiddle-bow.'

"'Thy fiddle-bow!' repeated he, with a look I distinctly recall at this moment; and then as he replaced the bit of rosin in its corner and

stepped down from the stool, dusting his hands, he quietly added, —

"'I have no rosin to spare this morning; but I believe Friend Obed Hussey keeps it.'

"Hating the sin but loving the sinner, you see! I went to Friend Obed Hussey's and got my rosin; but you may be sure I did not mention its purpose."

Such and such like were Nantucket men of the last generation; but a change not altogether owing to the invasion of coofs has passed upon the place. The belief, phraseology, dress, and character of the Friends, once the rule of Nantucket, are fast becoming the exception; the young men and maidens, though born to *yea* and *nay*, and to dove-color and chastened demeanor, quietly assume the world's garb, manners, and morals as soon as they are old enough to choose. The two meeting-houses, once filled to overflowing on every First-day and Fifth-day, are now only occupied by a few shadowy figures, who sit, the men with hat on head at one side, the women at the other, while a few of both sexes occupy the high seats facing the rest, in silence, except as the Spirit moves one or another to some quiet utterance of devotion, — not much

differing, after all, from those of other good people, except when sacraments, ceremonies, or "paid priests" come in question. Mysie, seeing the door open of a Fifth-day, would sometimes slip in and sit in the cool, shadowy place, calmed by the brooding silence and the spirit of rest,—not cheerful exactly, but yet content, the motionless gray figures, with white, set faces and folded hands, seeming more like a company of disembodied spirits, learning that "beyond these voices there is peace," than living men and women. Once a preacher was there, one supposed to be always charged with divine grace, and ready to utter it, as he did on this occasion; but Mysie for one found the silence more helpful. She subsequently asked Friend James how this and other preachers went from place to place, since salary or stipend of any kind for such services is abhorrent to Friendly tenets, and, as she suggested, it is not expected that in these days men will, like him of Tarsus, labor with their own hands for their own support, and spend the proceeds in ministering to the souls of others.

"No," replied Friend James, cautiously; "a man may hardly do that in this country. It is likely both food and raiment were cheaper in Judea than here. Well, if a Friend has a con-

cern of mind to go to a certain place, and is likely to do good there, he makes it known, and he is generally helped on his way by those who have what he has not."

"And they give him something to keep his family while he is gone, don't they?"

"Yes, that is sometimes needful, also."

"Well, that is about all that most clergymen out of the cities receive, except that their salaries are regular sums paid at regular times," suggested Mysie, and the talk drifted into its usual channel. We all know how difficult and how exasperating is the effort to make others even perceive, much more share, the enjoyments which delight us; and it is very possible that few of Mysie's usual associates would have cared to sit in that shadowy back room on a bright summer morning, watching the mending of saucepans or manufacture of porringers, conversing the while in a tentative and desultory fashion with the mender and maker, who, truth to tell, gave more attention to his work than to her; but she counts those hours among the most interesting of Nantucket memorabilia, and never once in that back shop encountered the dreary, deadly weight of boredom so apt to sit enthroned in the correctest drawing-rooms.

"*Après nous la deluge*" is undoubtedly a selfish and cynical utterance, and yet one may perhaps be pardoned some self-gratulation in having fallen upon even the latter days and last men of the epoch of individualism so rapidly passing away. This is the age of machinery; and not our clothes and furniture only, but our manners, speech, modes of thought, and occupations are moulded more or less after one model, turned out by the thousand instead of by the unit, and yet only one unit repeated a thousand times in the whole invoice. Seven hundred years ago, Bernard de Morlaix, sang "The time is waxing late;" but the salt had not lost its savor in his day as in ours, and the weariness of which Solomon as well as the great Cluniac complained had not reached the dead level of to-day, or the deader level toward which it is sinking. Courage, *mon iconoclaste!* The universal language, universal costume, universal government and currency are hastening toward us, or we toward them; and the day is not far distant when a man shall gape in Ispahan or Siberia precisely as he does in Boston or Natchez, and find precisely the same cause to do so, and the same solace for doing so.

SCRAP VIII.

"LILIAN" AND SEVEN SHARKS.

"WHERE are you going to take us to-day, young woman?" inquired the *pater familias* one morning, seizing Blanche by the magnificent Marguerite braid hanging down her back.

"I am so glad you thought to inquire before we started," replied she, with the demure drollery which was one of her pretty ways. "You are going to Wauwinet on the yacht 'Lilian' at nine o'clock. You will, won't you? Say yes! ah, please!" suddenly changing from a little queen to a coaxing child.

"Why, of course; how could I say anything else, having received my orders?" responded papa, in mock humility; and presently a very merry party, including the sisters, with faithful Harry in attendance, the señor, señora, the niño and niña, with Mysie, went trooping down to the steamboat wharf, beside which lay a trim white yacht with "Lilian" painted at the stern, and a

huge L evolving itself from the folds of the mainsail creeping up the mast under the united efforts of the captain and crew.

"Going to Wauwinet? Just on time," cried the captain cheerily; and as the crew also looked round with a cheerful smile, and moved his pea-jacket so that the ladies might conveniently step down upon the thwart, the passengers felt that the freedom of the boat was extended to them, and clambered or bounded as the case might be from the wharf to the thwart, selecting their seats as they were more or less boat-wise. One other individual appeared just as the "Lilian" was leaving the wharf, — a gentleman wearing a very new silk hat, a very cut-away plaid coat, a diamond ring, and mourning finger-nails, a breast-pin, and a loud laugh. He was very sociable, and presently informed the company that he was a grocer's drummer, and had sold one forgets how many barrels of sugar and boxes of nutmegs upon Nantucket already. Having laid this solid foundation of respectability, he proceeded to domestic details, and gave some very improving sketches of his dealings with his mother-in-law, whom he seemed to have under excellent discipline, although one could

not but suspect that the mother-in-law's daughter had proved a handful, and that the drummer was not averse to an occasional leave of absence from home. One circumstance supporting this theory was the insane eagerness this person displayed to kill something, anything in fact. If a gull flew within range he loudly bewailed himself that he had not a gun, although one must doubt the danger to the gull, had the best of weapons been at hand; a little beetle ran across the deck, and our friend's splay foot hastened to crush it, but fortunately a friendly crack offered timely refuge. At last, however, as the "Lilian" flew before a westerly wind, the joyous waves lapping her sides and sending little jets of spray over the forward deck, a demon whispered "bluefish" to the man of nutmegs, who at once demanded of the crew tackle, an old hat and an oilcloth coat; the good-natured crew at once produced all these requisites, and ten minutes later, with much outcry, and self-gratulation, and stamping about the deck, our friend began hauling upon his line, evidently meeting with considerable resistance.

> "When he shall try to pull thee out,
> God give thee strength, O gentle trout,
> To pull the rascal in!"

murmured Mysie; but the charitable wish was not fulfilled, and the beautiful creature presently lay dying at her feet, and, all his beauty lost in torment and death, was thrust into a bucket and out of sight. No doubt the necessity exists that man's life should be sustained by violently robbing the lower animals of theirs; but why this hideous necessity should be ranked as a pleasure, a social amusement, and a recreation, it is hard to understand. Or if the rule holds good in one instance, why not in all? If it is delightful for a party of men and women counting themselves refined, tender-hearted, gentle, and merciful, to make a party to go and kill fish, birds, or deer, why not go to see oxen and pigs and sheep slain, or slay them with their own hands? Or why not revive Tyburn and the Place de la Grève, and make parties to the hanging or burning of our criminals? The fish, the bird, the deer, die to support men's lives; the murderer is executed to protect them: cruel necessities both, and both involving depriving the victim of the life which God gave and we can by no possibility replace. So be it, if it is right in the one case and in the other; but as it is not the custom of civilization to dance around

its culprits, hacking them to pieces by inches and gloating over their agonies, why turn the slaying of our food into a similar amusement?

From which digression the practical mind will deduce two facts: there is excellent fishing of several varieties in Nantucket waters; and Mysie declines all invitations to go fishing.

A legend of the island relates that a dying Indian seer, lamenting over the decay of his race, prophesied, that, as a sort of compensatory justice, they should, in disappearing, carry the blue-fish with them, perhaps to stock the waters of the Happy Hunting-Ground. Somewhat remarkably, the bluefish verified this prophecy; and when Abram Quary, the last man with Indian blood in his veins, died, in 1855, not a bluefish was to be caught within ten miles of Nantucket. The curse was, however, of limited charter; and after twenty years or so the bluefish returned in great numbers, and are one of the principal dishes of the Nantucket tea-table to-day.

A little hour brought the "Lilian" to Wauwinet, represented to the ignorant eyes of a "stranger" by a long wooden pier, and a gravelly bank gradually rising to a slight altitude whereon is

built a unique house of entertainment, consisting of a small dwelling with a large pavilion annexed. This pavilion is open on three sides in fine weather, but is provided with a series of shutters swung at the top to staples driven into the cornice; in winter, or in stormy weather, or at night, these are lowered and made fast upon the inside, but at other times are swung up to the ceiling, where they lie flat, and offer a novel sort of decorative effect. The idea is not peculiar to Wauwinet, but was prevalent throughout Nantucket in primitive times, when the population was denser and the manners franker than now. In one house, in especial, we noticed in the beam traversing the ceiling of the long, low sitting-room a number of hooks, and were informed by the interesting old lady whose life has serenely passed within those walls, that, in the former days, a partition of thin boards in sections, or a leathern curtain, was hung across the room at night, converting half into a sleeping room. The pavilion at Wauwinet is furnished with tables, chairs, castors, and bills of fare suggestive of clams, lobsters, fish, and at dinner-time lamb, which animal should, we think, be ranked among the amphibia, from its universality at the sea-shore.

Nobody however, requiring refreshment except the drummer, who was last seen consuming lager beer, oysters, and a cigar, the party went through the pavilion, and taking a winding path across the beach grass, crossed the narrow neck of land, or rather sand, dividing the harbor of Nantucket from the open sea. This harbor, six or seven miles in length, is in itself a magnificent sailing ground, giving opportunity in rough weather for sea-sickness, shipwreck, fishing, even for whales and sharks in one or two instances, and all the other amenities of marine amusement; but when one crosses the "Haul-over," as this neck is called, for the simple reason that boatmen wishing to pass from the harbor to the open sea haul their boats over the few rods of sand intervening at this point, one finds Old Ocean in his sterner and grander moods awaiting one with tumult of surf, and strong, salt wind, and the blank, limitless expanse of water and sky peculiar to the eastern and southern shores of this perilous land. Far to the right rises Sankaty Head, eighty-five feet above the level of the sea, its summit crowned by a light-house, and the little hamlet of Quidnet and Sachacha Pond at its feet. Two or three little boats were dodging

their way in, now trusting themselves to the crest of a roller, now backing and holding off for another friendly lift. Finding the right moment, they at last came sliding up the beach, the fishermen tumbling over the sides, and hauling their little craft high and dry with the celerity and confidence of long practice. Two or three male passengers appeared, and all with much excitement and noise proceeded to land the horrible freight of sharks they had brought back, this species of game being very abundant in this precise locality. Seven of the ugly creatures were dragged out upon the beach and laid side by side, like the dead sailors of the Ancient Mariner's vision; then the proprietors casting invitatory glances at the "Lilian's" party, they proceeded to inspect the prize, the men poking them with their feet, prying open their mouths, and disputing over their weight and size as men always do on such occasions, and the women uttering various dainty exclamations of horror and astonishment, ending generally with a desire more or less pronounced to possess some of the teeth, which are often mounted in gold and worn as ornaments. We all know how fashion, like history, repeats herself, and undoubtedly

the brown beauties of Nantucket two or three hundred years ago also begged sharks' teeth for ornaments, only, with the noble simplicity of the savage, they thrust them through the flesh direct, without the intervention of a gold wire. On the inner curve of the Haul-over are bathing-houses, and the water is said to be warm and clean; but none of the Lilians made proof of it on this occasion, preferring to saunter or sit upon the fine dry sand and look at the sea and sky, tell each other long dreamy stories and theories, or simply gaze at the long rollers sliding up the sand and breaking at their feet, "soft as carded wool," laughing and clapping their hands in playful mischief if a daring foot or the hem of a garment were overtaken by their swift pursuit, — and yet with an *arrière-pensée* in all their mirth reminding one of crushing blows, and blinding spray, and shrieking wind, and drowning men.

"Rule the sea," indeed! Oh, no, Britannia; neither you nor the Bird of Freedom, nor any power of man, does more than toy with the monster's mane when he is in good humor. Let him growl, or shake his head, or show his teeth, and lion and eagle alike must fly or be devoured. Perhaps one reason we love the sea so much is

the instinct of hero-worship, — the attraction to something stronger than ourselves, — so deeply implanted in human nature.

The sound of an impertinent little steam-whistle drifting across the hummocks of the Haulover announced the departure of the tiny steamboat also plying between town and Wauwinet, and the Lilians, slowly gathering themselves and impedimenta from the sands, returned to the wharf in time to see the tug get herself away with much shrieking, ringing, and whistling; while the "Lilian," white, serene, and graceful, laid her pretty head to the open sea and floated tranquilly out upon its breast, — the two reminding one of a fussy old dowager and a charming young girl entering an august assembly. The only blot upon the gay homeward voyage was, that the man of spices and bluefish had decided to take the steamer back to town. This grief was, however, partially assuaged by Captain Smalley, who, leaving the helm in charge of the crew, entertained his passengers with sea-stories and Nantucket reminiscences full of the briny flavor and sparkling sunlight with which the hour and the scene brimmed over.

Approaching the town from the water, one

cannot fail to be impressed with its apparent size and importance. A stranger knowing nothing of the place would take it for a city of considerable extent, instead of a town never reaching a census of ten thousand souls in its palmiest days, and now numbering only about three thousand. One reason of this deceptiveness is that every public building is so placed as to make a feature in the picture. The square crenellated belfry of the North Meeting-house shows in its gray paint as the granite tower of a cathedral; the gilded dome of the Unitarian steeple glitters in the sunshine as if a veritable Ophir lay beneath; the High-School house, appropriately set upon the highest hillock in town, shows up like a city hall of whitest marble; the many wharves step bravely out into the harbor in a grim dance of death, while the great closed warehouses at their heads, once filled with oil and candles, or provisions for the whaling vessels erewhile crowding these empty docks, look like the closed mausoleums of dead and buried prosperity. Nor must one forget the most impressive dwelling-house in town, — a large and palatial residence standing in its own grounds, and flashing back the sunlight from unnumbered

windows; for this is the Poor-house, where benevolent housewives send dainties to feed the occasional pauper, young ladies go to read to him if he falls ill, and the grave and kindly taxpayers are always ready to hold meetings for the amelioration of his exceptionally happy lot. Here, only a few months since, lived and died a delightful old sailor named Robert Ratliff, who made the voyage to St. Helena with the captive emperor of the French, and spoke of him with more generosity and fairness than England's great poet exhibited in his taunting lines: —

> "But yesterday a king,
> And set with kings to strive;
> And now thou art a nameless thing,
> So abject, yet alive."

At the other wing of the town lies the Cliff, a sand-bank some forty feet in height; and upon its crest stand a number of summer cottages whither the Nantucket gentry have been in the habit of retreating during the summer months, following the great law of change laid down by a small boy of our acquaintance, who, looking discontentedly out of the window on a rainy day, remarked, —

"Mamma, I wish we'd move."

"Move, child! what for? Where do you want to move to?" inquired mamma.

"Oh, I don't care; but I wish we'd move some place, if it was only next house."

But in the new order of things dawning upon the shores of Nantucket, the Cliff has been seized upon by "strangers," who are putting up the regulation seaside villa in great numbers; and, out of compliment to the æsthetic taste of the day, painting it deep-red, sunflower-yellow, postman's-blue, or the deepest and muddiest chocolate to be bought for money. The most imposing of these novelties is a really stately house built by a celebrated New York lawyer. One droll revenge of Nature upon these invaders of her especial domain is the shutting off the view of herself they have been at such pains to secure, by turning their fine plate-glass windows into ground-glass, — an operation performed with great celerity by the combined action of fine sand, high winds, and constant moisture of spray and fog. The wise man does not dispute with Nature, but utilizes her; and what a situation this cliff would be for a blind asylum, a nunnery, or a young ladies' seminary! We present the suggestion gratuitously to the world. Another

little eccentricity of the breezes sweeping these cliff estates is the blowing away of the gardens attempted by the proprietors; the only way to keep a cuticle of soil upon the sand composing this eminence is to plant it with beach-grass; and however appropriate to the environs of a villa, beds of gladioli, pelargonium, and begonias may be, they do not answer the purpose, or in any sense hold their own before the piping winds which tear the poor things up by the roots, bury them in sand, and shriek exultingly upon their way. Beyond the Cliff and the villas stands a peculiar structure, — more like an immense washing-tub upon a trestle than anything else, — furnishing at once a subject of conversation to the approaching stranger and a handsome finish to the view of Nantucket at this western end of the amphitheatre. This is the Reservoir, — for Nantucket has its aqueduct as well as Rome, New York, London, and some other places, and like them embellishes the water-works in its own way; this reservoir for instance being painted of a very charming shade of red and placed close by Captain John Gardner's grave, makes a harmonious link between past and present, and a good terminus to a drive or

walk. Keeping all these points in view, and adding a liberal allowance of sky, water, sand, and retreating moors as background, one understands that Nantucket makes upon the mind of its approaching visitor the impression of a large place, — maritime, but also civic in its importance, — a juvenile Amsterdam or Venice perhaps; and one of the most frequent remarks heard upon the deck of the incoming steamboat is, "Why, I did n't know it was so much of a place." A few days of rambling about the town, however, places things upon a more comfortable and home-like footing; and the traveller having by cautious inquiries satisfied himself that there are no cathedrals, *maisons d'or*, town halls, picture galleries, or places where Washington or Franklin once sat down and wiped their brows, — nothing in short that he is in any way bound to know, or argue himself unknown, — begins to enjoy pottering about the quiet old streets, the deserted wharves, and quaint burying-grounds, doing nothing, seeing nothing, and lacking nothing, in a manner impossible to the show-places of earth. Hector St. John and Mysie perfectly agree in their appreciation of this hidden charm, although, as he pithily remarks, —

"Such an island, inhabited as I have described, is not the place where gay travellers should resort in order to enjoy that variety of pleasures the more splendid towns of this continent afford."

One of Mysie's favorite haunts was the shore-district lying at the eastern end of the town, a network of blind lanes, narrow crooked streets, old buildings and unexpected situations, — such as going in at one end of a lane apparently level and having to climb a steep flight of steps to reach the house and garden plots abutting upon it, and then to descend not only these but a second series of steps and a precipitous cobbled gutter to arrive at the other end. A bluff called Quanaty Hill, symmetrically balancing the Cliff at the other end of the town, once stood here, but a hundred and fifty years ago was dug away to make room at the water-side for the then growing maritime quarter. There seems, however, to have been no particular limit to the levelling process, and in some places the streets with their buildings, and especially the summer-houses or lookout places in which sea-faring people naturally delight, suddenly appear above the heads of passengers in the level ways below, giving one the bewildering sensation of being in a two-

story town, — common enough abroad, but not so frequent in our own practical land. The nomenclature of these streets is peculiar, being sometimes descriptive, — as New Dollar Lane, Step Lane, Candle Street, Stone Alley, and Try Works Lane; complimentary, as Pleasant and Fair Streets; named after the old families, — as Gardner Street, Hammatt's Corner, etc.; or adopted from the names of favorite vessels, — as Vestal Street, Brothers Lane, and Wasp Alley. Some of these more peculiar titles have suffered change, — as when the señor took Mysie to see Teaser Lane, and found a gilt sign-board proclaiming the thoroughfare to be Lyon Street.

"Too bad, too bad!" muttered the señor, really annoyed; "and the old Teaser Meeting-house gone too! That 's where it stood." And he pointed to a dismal cellar-hole full of thistles and old tin-kettles, a sight but too common in Nantucket, where the houses are almost as peripatetic as in Cheyenne, the alternative name of which place need not be more particularly mentioned here.

"And why Teaser Meeting-house?" asked Mysie, respectfully contemplating the cellar-

hole. "And why are you distressed at its disappearance?"

"Oh, it was one of the old landmarks; and as for the name, — 'all of which I knew and part of which I was,' — it came about in this way. The Methodists had built a new meeting-house, and wanted to dedicate it; but their ideas of how such matters should be conducted being a little mixed, they proceeded about as they would to launch and christen a new whaler, and it was considered appropriate in either case to hoist the national flag. I don't remember whether they fired a gun and broke a bottle of spirit or not; but when it came to the flag question, it was discovered that my uncle was the only man in town possessing a United States ensign, and I, standing by to listen to the discussion, was despatched to borrow it for the occasion. Now my uncle was not a Methodist, and he was a wag; so when I made known the petition he replied, —

"'Oh, I'll lend them a flag, of course; but one is as good as another: take this.'

"Now 'this' was the ensign of the brig 'Teaser,' and had that name upon it in letters a foot long or so, — bright yellow letters on a

red ground; real Spanish colors, by the way. Well, I took the flag, rolled up as it was, and brought it up here, obeying my uncle's directions in not letting it out of my hands, until at the proper moment it was hauled to the peak, and, as the newspapers say, 'flung to the breeze.' You can imagine the sensation! The Methodists had partly a mind to be mad about it; but, after all, what harm was done? So they laughed instead; and all the town laughed with them, and at them. They left the flag up until sunset. And from that day this was regularly called the Teaser Meeting-house, and this lane was Teaser Lane; and I don't believe in changing things."

At this juncture a door quietly opened close behind the speakers, and a woman clothed upon with a sun-bonnet effectually hiding her face, as a plaid shawl shrouded her figure, came out into the little garden between the house and the street. In her hand she carried a tin can of water, which she proceeded to pour around two or three melancholy little plants feebly struggling against sand and wind. In spite of this occupation it was, however, supposable that she had come to assist at the conversation and

the inspection of the cellar-hole; and the señor suavely greeting her, inquired, —

"What is the name of this street, madam?"

"Lyon Street. You might read it at the corner," replied the dame, never raising her face, which throughout the interview remained as hidden as that of the Dweller upon the Threshold.

"Lyon Street?" repeated the señor. "Did it ever have any other name?"

"Not as I know of," replied the Dweller, curtly.

"Was n't there a place named Teaser Lane round here, somewhere? It seems to me I remember it when I was a boy."

"Humph! If you was a boy here, you know well enough that this was Teaser Lane, and over there was the Teaser Meeting-house, moved away this ten year. I guess you know as much about it as I do, and don't need to ask no questions."

With this valedictory, she passed within the threshold and disappeared.

"Now I wonder," said the señor pensively, as he turned away, "if she is the survivor of those Methodists, and remembers me?"

"The evil that men do lives after them,"

quoted Mysie, with due solemnity: and so in the westering light they fared homeward through steep, quaint Orange Street.

SCRAP IX.

A SQUANTUM.

"WHAT is a 'squantum'?" inquired Mysie, hurling the question into the midst of the group chatting in the twilight upon the steps and in the doorway of their pleasant caravansary.

Such a pause ensued as when Discordia, appearing at the marriage feast of Peleus, flung her apple upon the board; only, following the course of the ages, the call now was for the wisest instead of the fairest.

"A 'squantum'!" repeated Rose and Blanche, softly; "why, what is a 'squantum,' to be sure?"

"The etymology of the word suggests the noble savage," quoth Harry, solemnly.

"I don't know what it means," said the biggest and bravest man in presence.

"Come, señor; of course you know!" said Mysie. "What is a 'squantum'?"

"A 'squantum' used, in the Golden Age,"

replied the señor, retrospectively, "to mean a party of merry lads and lasses, Cap'n Burgess's boat, a bushel of clams, several chickens, a lot of roasting-ears of Indian corn, potatoes, hard tack, cold coffee, luncheon baskets crammed with goodies, ten hours' sail more or less, and a great deal of laughter, not to say flirtation."

"That sounds very nice," exclaimed Rose, Blanche, and Harry in a breath. "Let 's have one!"

"That was in the Golden Age," repeated Mysie. "Well, now that we have arrived at the — let us say, type-metal age — "

"Typical is better," interpolated the *pater familias*.

"Now that most of this fair company have arrived at the typical age," amended Mysie, "what will a 'squantum' mean for us? I ask, because we are to be invited to one to-morrow."

A second silence fell upon the company, most of whom were probably considering of what their own age was typical. The señor was the first to recover himself.

"Oh, for us," said he cheerily, "it ought to mean considerable comfort in the arrangements; a very cautious partaking of the clams, with a

glass of wine afterward; a good deal of very improving conversation, not quite so much laughter as of old, an early bed, and considerable rest next day."

"And that's what *typical* means," sighed Mysie. "Well, as I said, I have private and reliable information that we are to be invited to a 'squantum' to-morrow at Surf Side on the South Shore, and that we are to meet the very élite of the island, — an honor I especially desire, and which is not easily attainable for strangers in these days."

"There, again!" said the señor. "We did n't use in the Golden Age to have any élite, or to think anything about whom we were to meet, except, of course, 'the fair, the inexpressive she' of the moment."

"It is quite as well to lay aside childish things sometime or other," remarked the señora.

"But, my dear, I went to a good many 'squantums' with you in those days," replied her husband.

Industrious inquiries in other directions evolved the further information that "squantum" means a clam-bake, with the addition of a picnic of less substantial dainties; that the name

was borrowed from either a special point of the Coatue beach frequented for this purpose by century-dead Nantucketers, or from an old Indian living in that vicinity and famous for his skill in the preparation of the clams and their adjuncts. Everybody knows the *modus operandi* of a clam-bake, but it shall be here set down according to the old squantum method.

A hole large enough to contain a cask is dug in the sand upon the beach, and paved with cobble-stones; upon them is built a substantial fire of drift-wood, — this sort of fuel imparting a picturesque flavor to the viands; when the stones are red-hot all through, and the fire burned out, a quantity of wet seaweed is thrown in, and upon it is emptied a bushel or more of clams dug within the hour; upon these are laid several chickens cut open as if to broil, some potatoes pared and cut in halves, and some ears of green corn in the husk; upon these again is laid more seaweed, and the top is finished off with an old sail or some boards, — anything to keep in the steam plentifully arising. An hour or so is ample for the cooking of this *olla podrida*, and during that time the feminine portion of the company have arranged either a

table or a level spot of clean sand covered with a cloth, whereon is spread the variety of biscuit, cakes, pies, and sweeties for which Nantucket was famous in the Golden Age, — although now the ladies are generally too much engrossed in discussing the rights of man (including woman) and the last new thing in metaphysics, to have much time to spare for the mysteries of the culinary art. But in the Golden Age there was much innocent rivalry in the manufacture of all sorts of toothsome dainties; and the result was highly pleasing, no doubt, to the gallant young fellows who living four fifths of their lives at sea were all ready, during the fifth spent on shore, to solace the inner man appreciatively.

Nowadays there is, to be sure, less motive for the preparation of those compensatory dainties, since the men no longer go to sea, and consequently no longer come home again; but in fact there are no longer any men upon Nantucket except the veterans, who assemble in the Cap'n's Room day by day to fight over their old battles with whale and iceberg, the few tradespeople, and the skippers of the boats, who in winter generally go to the Banks cod-fishing. But the young men, the bone and sinew of the land,

who should be the hope of its future and the strength of its present, are gone. Brave fellows! their bones lie upon many a Southern battle-field, in many an ocean depth, both North and South; for when the country called for volunteers to give their lives for her life and for her honor, this little island responded with a generous alacrity that left her drained of men and means, and before peace was declared sent almost every family into mourning. In 1860 the population was 6,094, and in 1870, 4,123; and of those two thousand souls a large proportion might have claimed the record,—

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

But other causes have co-operated with the war to drain away the men of Nantucket. The rumor of a new Golconda in California seems to have proved a sort of intoxication to this hardy and fearless people, and literally thousands of Nantucket men flocked to Eldorado, as miners, freighters, tradesmen: in fact, distributing themselves through every channel of industry and money-making, some of them remaining there, a few returning, and the larger part faring still farther a-field. Another great draught upon

Nantucket has been the call for men to "go down to the sea in ships" belonging to almost every nation under the sun; and although when sailing out of Nantucket they naturally returned thither, even if at long intervals and for brief spaces, when hailing from a foreign port they have no such obligation, and probably form ties as binding as those at home, wherever they may chance to be.

But the Squantum! the Squantum!

The funny little railroad, hardly more than a tramway, was on this occasion to answer instead of a boat; and the lovely South Shore was considered more convenient for typical people than Coatue, Tuckernuck, Pocomo, and the other points selected by the daring and tireless adventurers of the Golden Age. So, on a glorious summer afternoon, Dionis, with a shriek of derisive laughter, deposited some fifty persons among the lumber of the incipient Station, Rink, and Refreshment House, and immediately backed herself to Nantucket, having no facilities for turning round, leaving the Squantum to its fate. It seemed a pleasant and eke a comfortable one, for there was a tent with tables and benches, instead of the primitive arrangement of

seats upon the sand, shingles for plates, and fingers for forks, incident to the good old times. Also there were other benches upon the brow of the cliff, wherefrom to gaze upon the view, and there was the broad, level beach, and the steps leading down to it. At a little distance was a smoking and steaming mound, which a man was just covering with boards,— and therein lay the Hamlet of the play, Prince Clam himself.

The company was a selected one, intended by the projector of the squantum, himself a literary man, to collect what our modern slang calls the "culture" of Nantucket in one body, and present thereto a person who had expressed to him the wish to meet and become acquainted with that body.

If one dared digress again so soon, there is a great temptation in this word "culture," and its root, *cult* and *cultus* (that is to say, worship), and the closer than etymological mingling of root and derivative in the present exaltation of intellect above faith; but manfully resisting the temptation, we go on to say that Nantucket is a remarkable place in many respects, but in nothing more remarkable than in the high standard of *cult*-ivated intellect set up and fully reached

by a large proportion of the inhabitants. And when one in speaking of Nantucket says "inhabitants," one necessarily means women; for in this assemblage of fifty persons there were not more than ten men, and of these the larger part were "strangers." Everybody knew everybody, and everybody came and spoke to the visitor, with a cordial and easy grace savoring both of the primitive hospitality of the island, especially in an *al fresco* entertainment like this, and of that emancipation of manner springing not only from the habit of society, but from a large and varied study of mankind through literature and literary association. A person whose mind habitually deals with the stars (and Miss Maria Mitchell is Nantucket born, and includes her native island in her yearly orbit), or with the systems of the most advanced thinkers of the day (and Mill, Hegel, Emerson, and Carlyle are household words on Nantucket), or who reads the foreign and domestic newspapers, and studies the politics of the world, and knows just what Chili is going to do, and where the American navy is, and what is the best course to pursue with the Nihilists, and how soon there will be an Imperial reaction in France, and whether the "Sick Man"

will die or get well, and who beat in Egypt, and who inflicted the blow upon William Patterson, — a person who knows all this, we say, is not awkward or silent in any society, but having the courage of her opinions, has also that ease and suavity which nothing bestows more fully than courage and knowledge combined. Most of the party were naturally of, or approaching, the typical age; but there were a few specimens of *la jeunesse dorée* besides Rose, Blanche, and Harry, — especially two pretty, graceful maidens, unspoiled by the world, and fresh as the breeze tinting their cheeks, who came and bade the stranger welcome to Nantucket, with a simple ease of manner and sincerity of tone seldom found in city drawing-rooms. A good many of the older women were comely in a maturer way; and in fact there is something wonderfully preservative in plenty of fresh air (especially if it is salt as well as fresh), good consciences, early hours, and activity of body and mind. Mysie, looking and listening through two or three hours, felt that this little barren island had produced a people of its own, and one of which New England may be proud and fond. Not only may she boast that throughout the annals

of this place the men have been proved brave and the women pure, but that on these solid foundation stones has been raised a fair column, whose only blemish is that it is finished with the globe and not with the cross.

"The Squantum is ready!" gravely announced the official presiding over the mound of Hamlet, and at the word everybody gathered about the board (literally the board) under the tent, and presently the clams were presented hot and hot, each one lying cosily in a bath of his own juices, his lower shell offering a sufficient dish, his upper one coyly ajar that one might see the treasure within. Now Mysie had gone to the squantum oppressed with at least one silent terror weighing upon her spirits, and this was that she would be obliged in courtesy to taste the clams in spite of a very pronounced aversion to that "festive bivalve." But once more virtue brought its own reward; a courteous neighbor showed her how the casket was most judiciously opened, and assured her that although forks were permitted, fingers were of older date and of greater virtue. The neophyte obeyed, took up the morsel in her fingers, put it in her mouth, and closed her eyes lest the

expected distaste should be too apparent. But what! Surely this luscious, savory morsel melting upon one's palate, and conveying an essence-of-ocean flavor not to be described, was not a clam! This octave note of the song of the senses chanted by summer sky and weltering sea and fanning breeze and languorous sunshine, and all the physical joy of health, Nature, and idlesse,—ah, yes, these all were consummated in the flavor of that first ideal clam! Such a surprise is not to be repeated, and Mysie ate no more, lest the demon of disillusionment should lurk within the shell; but she did eat the one, and she knows the gastronomic climax of a squantum, and can most earnestly recommend it to her friends.

The noble rage of hunger appeased, a few persons, both men and women, made little informal speeches, generally humorous,—as when the young lady at present filling the pulpit of the North Church said pensively, that no poet but Shelley could be appropriately quoted just now, adding a personal *bon mot* addressed to the stranger, both funny and complimentary. The author of "Rosedale," so happily successful both as novelist and journalist, was present,

a man of Nantucket lineage and birth, and cosmopolitan training, who made a witty speech at the time, and proved most agreeable in conversation afterward. Mysie's neighbor, — she who had so deftly opened clams and good-humoredly encouraged the neophyte, — was called upon, and in a few terse, strong sentences showed quite another side of character from the playful ease appropriate to the feast; dealing now with the vexed question of woman's claim to the same part as man in the world's fight, and showing an energy and decision in the matter suggestive of the great probability of her gaining whatever position she aimed at.

When she sat down, Mysie timidly asked a question about some point of which she had never heard before. It was courteously explained, and then came the question, —

"Don't you read the newspapers?"

"Very seldom," replied Mysie, with contrition.

"But how then do you keep yourself informed of the movements of the age, in our own and other countries?" was the severe query.

"I don't," replied Mysie, yet more contritely; and perceived that she was set down as one

of those flies upon the wheel of Progress who, however minutely, retard its victorious course toward that Utopia wherein woman is to be enfranchised, cultured, made by some mysterious process free of those physical disabilities at present limiting her efforts, and, miraculously endowed with ability to carry Adam's burden as well as Eve's, to find time for double the work of which the folk-song says, —

> "Man may work from sun to sun,
> But woman's work is never done."

Probably while the world endures, women will love, marry, bear children, tend them, guide the house, and even to old age remain the central point, the equilibrium, of the home. One does not very well see how, amidst these engrossing duties and joys, the woman is also to read Political Economy, study and weigh the lives of public men, inform herself of the hidden mysteries of diplomacy at home and abroad, study tariffs, currency, prohibitory laws, and the like, without all which knowledge neither man nor woman is fit to take part in the councils of the nation, or to throw an intelligent vote. And if, endowed with superhuman energy and ability,

she does all this without leaving her own work undone, and finds in some great crisis that she has arrived at opposite conclusions to those of the man of her heart or the son of her bosom, will she go to the polls and glare fiercely in the eyes of her beloved as she throws the vote neutralizing his? Or if, as is more likely, the stronger nature dominates the weaker or more loving, can she be sure that if she prevails, she will prove in the end the wiser or the happier?

"All women do not marry. In Massachusetts alone, the excess of women over men is as," etc. We are all familiar with that formula; but where is the girl of seventeen who says, or who will cheerfully let somebody else say for her: "I am never likely to marry; four women out of five don't, and of course I am one of the four. I will ask papa to provide me some political works, some Congressional Reports, and the best party newspapers on both sides, and begin to fit myself for perpetual maidenhood and the political arena." Ah, Rose and Blanche, and pretty slips of girls generally, is that the way you reason in your own loving maidenly hearts?

But when grim Time has brought the certainty of a single life, and left behind him some

of those bitter, grievous memories buried in almost every maiden heart past its youth, is that the time to begin to study kingcraft? For in a republic, — and God bless our own! — every voter is a sovereign. Men begin their life's work in their teens, and men ripen more slowly and last longer than women. Can the woman expect, turning to man's work as a refuge from woman's disappointment, to gain the varied information, dispassionate judgment, inbred self-control essential to a statesman, or indeed to any man who aims to guide the world?

The dregs of a life disappointed of its best hopes are fit to offer neither to God nor man.

The feast both of clams and oratory finished, the company returned to the outer air, where an enterprising photographer, brought out from town by Dionis during the dinner, petitioned for leave to make a picture of the group, relying for payment upon the inherent vanity of mankind, which was sure to induce every man and woman there to buy one of the pictures as containing his or her own portrait.

Finally, as twilight fell upon the sea and on the purple moors stretching far out of sight

along its shore, the gay party went home, their hearts warm with mutual content and charity.

Later in the evening, tempted by the radiant charm of the full moon, Mysie strayed around the town, still and calm as moonlight itself, and looking in at the Old North Vestry heard the young pastor eloquently weaving some allusions to the fifty who sat down and ate bread and fish upon the seashore that day, into an exegesis of the feeding of the five hundred who sat down by fifties on another shore and in other days, and yet the Giver always the same.

SCRAP X.

SCONSET.

SEVEN miles from the town of Nantucket, on the bold headland facing full Atlantic, at the southeast extremity of the island, lies the fishing hamlet of Siasconset, or, as it is indigenously styled, Sconset. Like the rest of the island, or even more than other localities, this hamlet is fast hastening to destruction,—that paradoxical destruction born of prosperity. It was built, or rather a few fishing-houses for occasional use were built, in 1676, and for two hundred years it bore a character all its own, as distinctly flavored, and to the appreciative palate as piquant and delicious, as that one squantum clam. But, alas! the world has found it out, has laid its degrading and commonplace grasp upon it; and the beginning of the end already stares one in the face in shape of cottages *ornée*, inclosed grounds instead of "commons," and groups of summer boarders

in dreadfully correct costumes sitting upon verandas, or, in wild abandonment to the freedom of untrammelled Nature, crouched upon shawls spread on the sand, and doing tatting and ric-rac under the shade of an umbrella.

It is a moot question where life ceases to be conscious of itself and its surroundings. Mysie is inclined to think all creation is conscious in its own way, and that man's assumption that his own little link in the chain is the only one endowed with what he calls reason, is only one more proof of the charming arrogance characteristic of that special link. Most of the old houses at Sconset have stood there for more than a century, the stones, the sand, the gray old walls, the wild moorland are the same; what if all these know and feel their own aristocratic dignity, and the spic-and-span newness of the new lords and new laws who are coming to push them from their stools! Fancy an old Castilian hidalgo, poor as poverty and proud as Lucifer, who sees a colony of Manchester cotton-spinners building wooden villas and lodging-houses for operatives just outside his gates and opposite his very windows! Ten years from now, unless some kind Fate avert, one might as well stop at

Cottage City as go on to Sconset, and might hope to enjoy the pleasures of unspoiled Nature, human or inhuman, as quietly at Long Branch as at Sankaty Head.

Let us read the description of this place a century ago, given by Hector St. John. Already it has the mystical flavor of antiquity, the sad refrain of Nevermore, so strangely attractive to the soul whose highest hope is Evermore; but when the ten years are passed, the story of the American Planter will have become all but mythical: —

"I arrived at last at Siasconset. Several dwellings had been erected on this wild shore for the purpose of sheltering the fishermen in the season of fishing, but I found them all empty except the particular one to which I had been directed. It was, like the others, built on the highest part of the shore, in the face of the great ocean; the soil appeared to be composed of no other stratum but sand, covered with a thinly scattered herbage. What rendered this house still more worthy of notice in my eyes was, that it had been built on the ruins of one of the ancient huts erected by the first settlers for observing the appearance of the whales. Here lived a single family without a neighbor. I have never seen a spot better calculated to cherish contemplative ideas; perfectly unconnected with the great world, and far removed from its perturbations,

the ever-raging ocean was all that presented itself to the view of this family, — and it irresistibly attracted my whole attention.

. . . . . .

"This family lived entirely by fishing, for the plough had not yet dared to disturb the parched surface of the neighboring plain; and, indeed, to what purpose could this operation be performed? Here I found a numerous family of children of various ages, the blessings of an early marriage; they were ruddy as the cherry, healthy as the fish they lived on, hardy as the pine knots. The eldest were already able to encounter the boisterous waves, and shuddered not at their approach, early initiating themselves into the mysteries of that seafaring career for which they were all intended; the younger, timid as yet, on the edge of a less agitated pool ['Corn Pond?'], were teaching themselves with nut-shells and pieces of wood, in imitation of boats, how to navigate in a future day the larger vessels of their father through a rougher and deeper ocean. I stayed here two days, on purpose to become acquainted with the various branches of their economy and their manner of living in this singular retreat. The clams (the oysters of this shore), with Indian dumplings (a peculiar preparation of Indian meal boiled in large lumps), constituted their daily and most substantial food. Larger fish were often caught on the neighboring Rips, and these afforded them their greatest dainties. They had likewise plenty of smoked bacon.

"The noise of the spinning wheels announced the industry of the mother and daughters. One of them had been bred a weaver, and, having a loom in the house, found means of clothing the whole family. They were perfectly at ease, and seemed to want for nothing."

Our planter goes on to say, speaking of the island generally, that he found very few books among the inhabitants, — a few Bibles and school-books, both in the English and Natick-Indian tongues, and also several copies of Hudibras and of Josephus; Hudibras being the favorite of the whole, although, as he naïvely remarks, nobody appeared in the least to understand the satire.

From this nucleus of one settled home, Sconset grew through the next century to a hamlet of permanent inhabitants, many of the houses being built upon the ruins of the huts erected to observe the whales, as Hector puts it, and many of the huts being enlarged and strengthened into stocky little houses spreading themselves upon the ground, and crouching their bodies to let the wind blow over them,— very much as one may have seen an *Isopod iniscus* flatten herself to the ground when the sheltering board or stone

was lifted off. Those dwellings erected by men who regarded the sea as a large stew-pond, intended to provide them with cod, hake, and haddock, an occasional whale, and the frequent clam, took it no more into account in placing their houses than they did the turnip field which had at last invaded the sterile common, of whose capacities the "Pennsylvania Farmer" speaks so contemptuously. They did not want to see the sea, and they did want to see each other; so the first permanent cottages were built in two rows facing each other, just like the lads and lasses in a contra dance,—the weather row, so to speak, turning their backs upon the ocean, and carrying their squat roofs so near to the ground as to leave only room for some pig-pens, rubbish heaps, and fish-sheds opposite the back windows; and as they were placed so close together that the housewives could easily converse with each other out of the end windows while at their work, this line of cottages entirely shut off the sea-view from their opposite neighbors, — the result being a little village perched on the verge of a cliff overlooking a magnificent marine view, and hardly a window in it from which one can see the water!

The next cycle of Sconset history was marked by the discovery of some of the Nantucket magnates who had grown rich by whaling, that the air of this locality was much more bracing than that of the town, or even of the west Cliff adjoining it, and that it would be rather a good idea to go out there and stay a part of the summer. The little mob of cottages setting to each other upon the brow of the cliff offered no fitting accommodation for these magnates, even had there been enough in number, and they proceeded to erect a sort of marine villa as different from the impertinences of to-day as they were from the huts of the whale observers,— being plain, comfortable houses, painted with many coats of white or Quaker-brown paint, with green blinds, a piazza in front, and a "walk" on top, a little stable to shelter the excellent horse, absolutely necessary for a family living seven miles from its home or any sort of market, and an enclosed paddock for the cow, whose milk, in the degeneracy of the age, had become an essential to the grandchildren of those who had lived contentedly on clams and Indian dumplings. These dignified and comfortable summer dwellings were arranged in a street running at right

angles to that upon the cliff, and forming an approach to it; but these, as befitted their dignity, stood well apart, each in its own grounds, while the street was so wide that at least three wheel-tracks to-day serpentine through the grass clothing it from side to side. Here the well-to-do ship-owner, merchant, or captain, his wife and children, with perhaps a "help" or two, came out in the summer time, bringing great hampers of provisions, beds, old clothes to be worn out, and some ponderous pieces of sewing to be accomplished in the long still days. The fathers went fishing, stood on the cliff with spy-glasses in their hands watching for wrecks, or sat upon each other's piazza in roomy leathern arm-chairs tilted back, smoking interminable pipes, and slowly telling as interminable stories. The mothers kept the house, did that sewing, or took their knitting-work and ran into neighbor So-and-so's to have a little afternoon chat, and learn the new recipe for sponge cake or green-corn pudding. The children ran wild, dug wells upon the beach, built sand-forts, tumbled down the cliff, and roamed the moors for berries or wild-flowers. And the young folks? Well, they amused themselves, too. Ask any

middle-aged Nantucketer what he or she used to do at Sconset summer evenings, and first he or she will laugh roguishly, then sigh regretfully, then say: "Well, well, young folks will be young folks, you know," and then proceed to give you some very amusing stories.

One of the whimsical links between man and the lower orders of creation here presents itself to contemplation. The tutelary deity of Sconset was the whale; the earliest buildings were "the huts built by the first settlers for observing the appearance of the whales." Having observed and captured a good many of them, the descendants of these first settlers became rich enough to build summer houses at Sconset and take their pleasure therein on a very liberal scale of housekeeping. The whales departed from observation not only of the settlers, but even of the vessels circling the Poles in search of them; the men enriched by whaling grew poor; the summer houses, no longer repaired and painted, grew forlorn and monumental; the owners died and their children went away; nobody bought houses which everybody wished to sell; and the whale, and the magnates, and the Golden Age deserted Sconset all at once.

For some mournful years the villas stood closed, forlorn, and hopeless; the contra dance upon the cliff went on all the same, for the men who live by cod, haddock, and hake are much more certain to find their living than those who live by whales. What saith Bunyan: —

> "He that is down needs fear no fall;
> He that is low, no pride;
> He that is humble ever shall" —

but the last line does not fit Nantucket even at Sconset. And during these prosperous years, and later on, a great many more little squat cottages grew up behind the contra dance, and a town-pump gave solidity and a nucleus to the settlement; and a good many of the townspeople — not at all rich or magnate-ical — owned these cottages and came out in a quiet way to spend a few days and get a change of air; and the failure of the whale-crop did not very much alter this custom, except by making everything a good deal more quiet.

But now, since 1880, another change has come upon Sconset; now the hardy fisherman upon the cliff finds that he can make more money by renting his cottage to the summer boarder, and himself going "down town" for change of air,

than by living quietly at home. And the hardy fisherman having a keen eye to his own interest, pursues it; and the summer boarder hiring the cottage puts a little board on the outside announcing that this is Miacomet Lodge, or Sans Souci, or Ric-Rac Refuge, or some equally appropriate title; and having arranged some striped shawls, cretonne, brackets, vases, and other paraphernalia of home-making, proceeds to enjoy himself, herself, itself, very satisfactorily to all but the discontented traveller, who, flying from the atmosphere of city ways, city talk, city thoughts, experiences, and anticipations, comes to this little out of the way corner of the globe to find all that he has fled thrusting its head out of the fishermen's windows with, —

"Excuse me; but do you know if Captain Baxter has brought the mail-bag yet? I am so anxious to see this morning's 'Advertiser.'"

Oppressed with these thoughts, and sauntering moodily along the edge of the cliff one day, Mysie came upon an ancient man, sitting on a bench and looking through a spy-glass. Her heart warmed to him as it might to Osceola viewing the graves of the Seminoles; and as

he courteously moved to the other end of the bench and said it was a fine morning, she sat down and echoed the sentiment. The spy-glass was offered, but being able to discern both the sky and the sea with the naked eye, and there being nothing else to look at, Mysie declined the civility. Fancying, however, that her new friend looked a little disconcerted, she said, —

"I suppose you are quite in the habit of coming out here to look for wrecks, are you not?"

"Faith, thin," replied the venerable being, speaking *in extenso* for the first time, "it's the only toime I iver was herre in me life, and I hope it'll be the last; fur a nastier hole I niver see."

"Oh, you don't live here, then?" inquired Mysie, feeling as if she were in a cold shower-bath.

"Me live herre!" exclaimed he, indignantly; "me home is in South Boston, wid an iligant view of the harrbor and forty-eight ferry-boats a day just forninst me house, and a street-band three times a week in the Square, and the church jist handy; and what made me gurrls think av comin' to this haythin ould place, bates me."

And this was Mysie's Ancient Mariner!

This, however, is episodical, and we go back to the day when a big wagon, drawn by two very competent horses, stood before the house in Pearl Street, and the papa and mamma, with Rose, Blanche, and Harry, and the señor and señora, with the joven, the señorita, the niño and niña, and finally Mysie and the driver, were gayly packed into the four capacious seats and drove away as enthusiastically and noisily, after leaving the precincts of the town, as if not one member of the party had attained years of discretion, — that much-lauded condition not being usually attained without the payment of a good deal of the capacity for enjoying irrational enjoyments, such as jolting over a rough road, mimicking Dionis, singing college songs, making puns, and laughing at those made by others.

It was on this occasion that Mysie first saw the Nantucket moors, — and yet did not see them, for, with moors as with ocean and mountains, one must be in the mood to see, or one sees nothing, except as a surveyor.

In the calm light of reason these moors consist of some hundreds of acres of nearly level land, comprising the whole interior of the island, and stretching from shore to shore. The seven-

mile road to Sconset lies across them, and once clear of the town and past the outlying farms, one might well fancy himself not only out of New England, but out of America, and set down on a Yorkshire or Scottish moor. Some people say, "Oh, is n't it just like a prairie?" But it is n't; for it lacks the immensity, the leisurely sweep to an almost unattainable horizon, the grandeur and oppressiveness of a genuine prairie. Besides, the soil, which Hector St. John justly describes as a stratum of sand thinly covered with poor soil, is not in the least like the wealthy loam of one class of prairie, or the alkaline or shardy soil of others; and of course the soil affects the herbage, and here we have neither buffalo-grass, sage-bush, nor mesquite,— no grasses at all in fact, but an infinity of those native growths we call weeds, hardy independent little individuals, true Nantucketers, satisfied with their own identity, and serenely indifferent to the fact that their visitors are searching among them for what is not there. Most of these happy little weeds have flowers, not always very perceptible, but to be found by sympathetic eyes; and some of them are royal in their beauty like the scarlet lilies (reminding one

always of Solomon), the deep-tinted firm-petaled wild roses, the azaleas or swamp honeysuckle, and the rare sebacia, found in one or two places. But chief among the flora of these moors is ranked, both by inhabitants and visitors, some patches of veritable heather, — none of the make-believes doing duty in various parts of our country for this Old-World darling of poet, painter, and pedestrian, but true purple Scotch heather. It is a little shy, and it is not everybody who is invited to its *pleasaunce*. Mysie discovered a patch one day during a big walk, and found herself disliked by a Nantucket friend to whom she spoke carelessly of what she had seen, showing proof in two or three stalks at her button-hole.

"Oh, but we don't like people to find out where it grows!" naïvely exclaimed the botanist; and Mysie sympathized with her, for she had known the misery of seeing a lovely woodland nest of climbing fern desecrated and desolated by annual invasions of Goths, who, not content with loading buckets and boxes with the beautitiful fronds, tore up the plants by the roots, dragged them down from the heights, and trampled and destroyed, until nothing was left, and

the invasion ceased. Also she remembers the time when the sweet-breathed, rose-tinted mayflower (*Epigea repens*) was really a prize, and only to be found by going to its own country near Plymouth Rock, or was received as a special token of regard from one's cousins living in that neighborhood; but now it is as much matter of merchandise as pea-nuts, and suggests as tender associations.

By next year, probably the "smart" boys of Nantucket will have discovered that heather is scarce and therefore valuable, and every inch of the "commons" will be searched and every plant plucked from its home of centuries. *Eheu!*

In former times anybody wishing to drive from town to Sconset, or to the South Shore, did so at his own discretion; and if he found too many of his neighbors had followed his favorite line, so that the wheels had cut inconveniently deep through the surface and into the sand, he took a parallel line, until at last the course as the crow flies from town to Sconset was scarred with wheel-tracks, like the bars of a gridiron or the wrinkles on a discontented brow. Time does not smooth out wrinkles as a general thing,

and he did not these. Kindly Nature has to be sure covered them with a charitable mantle of green; but this makes the matter of driving over them worse, since the wheels and the horse's missteps discover the inequalities of the surface, instead of the driver's eyes. Moved by these annoyances, somebody struck out the "New Road" to Sconset, which claims to be somewhat shorter, but, as dispassionate judges decide, is already about as bad in condition as the old. An attempt was made to border this road with evergreen trees, and Captain Josiah Sturgis, Mr. Gardner, and the town fathers all did something in that way; but it is the less important to discover exactly who claims the greatest share of the work, since the trees are all dead, dying, or relapsing into nothingness by shrivelling in the east wind. When the white man first discovered this little island it was covered with a heavy growth of oak, cedar, and other timber, but as usual the white man soon disposed of all that sort of thing without an attempt to replace it; and after a couple of centuries of parching and starving, the indignant soil refuses to support the new growth which the white man has become civilized enough to desire. However, to

our mind the bare wind-swept moors, with the sea glimmering on the horizon, is better than woodland.

And so the big wagon reached Sconset, every feminine hand holding a bunch of flowers, every masculine frame glowing and breathless from its exertions in jumping out to gather them, and then running after the wagon which waited for nobody. Down the wide street with the closed balænarian villas and the two hotels, — one old and the other new, and each possessing its own character, — and through the green lanes dividing the rows of fishermen's cottages close upon the cliff, to a pleasant little house standing across the end of the street, and never seeming to imagine it was in anybody's path; and here a cheery old man — once the dauntless commander of a whaling ship, then a fisherman, and now a much-to-be-prized narrator of sea-stories — took charge of the horses, and invited the guests into his house. They preferred the beach, however, and after straying for a while along the brow of the cliff, thirty-three feet high here, and commanding the same illimitable, sailless expanse of vexed waters as that at South Shore, they descended some steps to the sands.

Here were collected nearly all the summer population of Sconset, for it was the bathing hour; and although only a few persons are determined enough to adventure in these troubled waters, everybody likes to see other persons doing so.

It is certainly rather a heroic amusement, and better suited to the "athletes," who in the lightest of costumes plunged boldly in, diving through the toppling wall of the approaching breaker and disporting themselves outside the line of surf like young Neptunes, than to the women, who, fettered in decent clothing, clung convulsively to a rope, one end made fast on shore, the other about twenty feet out at sea, and allowed the incoming waves to break over them. Owing to the violence of the tide the water is very dirty, bringing in quantities of seaweed torn into little clinging bits, a great deal of sand, and a scum of yellowish color looking like conglomerated fish-oil. The natural result is, that, after clinging to the rope for ten or fifteen minutes and being deluged with twice as many breakers, the ladies emerge, or rather get up and run away before the next wave catches them, covered with a shag of marine débris, very salubrious no doubt, but reminding

one of the pictures of Orson in the child's story-book, and suggestive of some very protracted cleansing process before dress or wearer can be made presentable. But it was a pretty sight to see a stalwart *pater familias*, an exponent of muscular Christianity as it was reported, who came down to the water followed by four or five little blue-flannel-suited creatures, and left them standing hand in hand at the edge of the water, curling their little white toes into the sand and shrieking with delight, while he plunged round for a while by himself, executing various elephantine gambols for the amusement of his children; then, standing mid-leg deep, he took one after the other in his arms and dipped and ducked them carefully but quite thoroughly, the smaller ones clinging tight to his neck with an undoubting faith, very pretty and very suggestive of a true paternal and filial relationship. When all were done they scuttled away to the bathing-houses like a covey of partridge chicks, and the father, taking a header through the next emerald wall rising in front of him, swam out toward Africa, but, as one most devoutly hopes, did not go all the way.

Not feeling at all attracted to Sconset as thus

seen in possession of her brother and sister coofs, Mysie still felt it a duty to "do it" thoroughly, and accordingly engaged board at one of the hotels for a date some weeks in advance; then joyfully resuming their seats in the big wagon, the gay party drove townward again over the moors where now the great gray owls hiding in the swamps at the foot of Saul's Hills began to flit mysteriously across the darkening sky, and the mists to gather ghostily in the heathery hollows.

But not yet did the moors reveal themselves, for like the owls they love not gay crowds.

SCRAP XI.

SCONSET IN SUMMER.

IT has been mentioned by several authors in several tongues, both dead and living, that this world is given to change; and one finds it easier to receive this axiom with the faith appropriate to so venerable a saying, by having proved it true very often in one's own experience. Nantucket, in its normal condition, was not changeable; but in its present condition it is about as changeable as the hands of a clock, or the line of surf upon a beach, or the size of the visible moon. Three weeks from the day of the Sconset party, its members were scattered far and wide, — Mysie, and probably the driver, alone remaining on Nantucket. The señor, the señora, the joven, señorita, niño and niña, Rose, Blanche, Harry, the papa and mamma,— all were gone. New faces surrounded the table, new forms filled the parlor, hall, and porch; the Coffin reunion was approaching, and the Clan

Coffin was gathering from north, east, south, and west.

Again, it has been averred by several authors, that, in a changing world, no detail is more changeable than woman. This is an error: woman is constant, sometimes for quite long periods of time; and Mysie, being the most constant of her sex, declined to become interested in new friends, preferring to wander with the simulachre of Blanche to the Old North Burying-ground, and sit upon a tomb looking at the ripening blackberries, and wishing the child were there to tease her about them, or to stroll disconsolately through Guinea and the water-side streets, wishing for somebody to tell her their legends. But Experience,

> "—— with a subtile smile in her mild eyes,
> The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh,
> Half whispered in her ear —"

"You are getting bored in this place; go away for a little, and when you come back there will be something new to interest you." It was good advice, if a little cynical; and Mysie made arrangements to go, earlier than she had planned, for a week or two to Sconset. Now the usual way to go to Sconset is to take passage with

Captain Baxter, who comes over every day to meet the boat and fetch the mail; or with Levi Coffin, who drives a friendly opposition wagon; or with some other Sconset man down town, in a casual sort of way, — and this style of passage costs a dollar; but one may hire a comfortable carry-all, good horse, and driver for three dollars, and enjoy one's self, — and this was the mode of Mysie's second expedition to Sconset. Her kind and handsome hostess, and a new friend, Myra by name, accompanied her. The day was exhilaratingly fine; the moors began to reveal themselves; the red lilies bloomed on every side, and some pretty but disappointing red berries called meal-berries, and filled with a sort of cotton-dust, offered temptation to several descents and short foraging expeditions. But seven miles is not a great distance; and all too soon the goal was reached, the horse baited, the dinner eaten, the beach visited; and Mysie, standing forlornly at the gate, saw her pleasant companions drive away, leaving her as lonely as she ever was in her life.

Who is it that says it is impossible to enjoy solitude without one companion to whom we may confide, "How sweet is solitude"? It must

have been Solomon. Now Mysie had no companion, and the rest "*va sans dire.*" She was awfully, horribly lonely, and in the morose condition of mind induced by a lonely fit of the blues. Had this week been all she knew of Sconset, she would have preserved a discreet silence about the place, preferring to argue herself unknown to confessing her ignorance of its charm. Later on she did come to know it, as shall be told; but during this week in August she altogether failed to discover it, or to find any way of employing herself. She did not know how to do ric-rac or tatting, and so could not join the circle of ladies who, with doors and windows close-shut, because of the furious wind, sat in the penitential parlor all the morning, content and cheerful in a manner honorable to human nature, but incomprehensible to Mysie's nature. It was impossible to walk comfortably on account of the furious wind, the drifting sand, the glare of the sun, and the absence of paths; there was nowhere to drive except back to town, or to make an all-day excursion to Wauwinet; the amusement of watching the bathers had its limit, and to join them was a method of enjoyment not appealing to Mysie's sense of fitness.

She looked for the Sconset people, hoping to improve her mind by maritime, cetaceous, and piscatory conversation; but the Sconset people, as has been said, abandon their hamlet to the summer boarders as absolutely as the Acadians abandoned Acadia to the English, so that the home-sick South Boston Irishman was the nearest approach to an Ancient Mariner Mysie at this time discovered.

Still, to do a dismal memory full justice, there was one hour of enjoyment in that week worth the six days, twenty-three hours surrounding it, as the pewter-hued silver setting encased our grandmother's diamonds. Sconset, as has been stated, lies along the edge of a bluff ascending in height from thirty-three feet at the village to eighty-five at Sankaty Head, where stands a pharos known as Sankaty Light, — naturally an object of interest where objects of interest are few and simple. There are two modes of communication between village and light-house, — one a grass-road faintly defined across the sheep pastures and uninclosed moor-land, practicable for carriages if the driver does not mind taking down and putting up five sets of bars, or for foot passengers who can either climb or creep

through said bars, and do not mind scorching sun and tornadoes of wind by day, getting lost by night, and torn shoes and fringed skirts in any case; the other path lies along the edge of the bluff, so close indeed that in many places it seems to overhang the beach, and occasionally is so crumbled away that one must cling to the fence on the landward side, or even sidle along upon its lowest rail. The atom of risk thus incurred has its fascination of course, and is perhaps the best thing at Sconset during the Vandal invasion; but as this path faithfully follows all the headlands and bays scalloping the coast line, it makes a walk of something over two miles, and, including the fence-gymnastics, a rather fatiguing one, especially with sun and wind as adversaries, while after dark it is decidedly unsafe. One evening after tea, however, Mysie, driven to desperation by ric-rac and mouldy hay inside the house and deadly dulness and soft sand outside, resolved at least to earn a good night's rest by the five-mile excursion to the light-house and back. In the village, all South Boston sat on the benches bordering the bluff, or disported itself on the sands below; but this was soon left behind, and pass-

ing through the grounds of a gentleman who with a fine sense of justice has provided gates and a shell-walk for the public, as compensation for claiming a section of the bluffs as his own, Mysie entered upon the grand domain of Nature and felt herself elevated into that large and calm atmosphere wherein the petty annoyances and discontents of life are swept out of sight like mosquitoes before a north wind. The sun had set, and the glory of the west was reflected in the east in sympathetic radiance, while far out upon the empty ocean the fog came creeping in, — a dark dweller upon the threshold; the sigh of Nature, "In the midst of life we are in death." But the fog was yet far away, and east and west glittered and glowed with rose and gold, and the salt air came sweet and strong to quicken the pulse and give vigor to brain and muscle; and up against the blue of heaven rose the white shaft of the light-house, its newly-kindled light already contending with the dying glory of the day, — and Mysie, well content, sat down in a fence-corner and gave herself over to forgetfulness of moral mosquitoes. Time was made for slaves, and she felt herself suddenly free; and with the intemperance of sudden enfranchise-

ment abused her freedom, so that, when she resumed her journey, both east and west were grown dim and wan, and the face of sea and land showed beneath the first film of fog like the still face of the dead beneath the reverent veil. The path about to swerve inland toward the light-house indulged in one last freak resulting in a bad bit, across which one must scramble by aid of the fence, itself extremely shaky; and so it fell out that when at last Mysie, climbing the little hill, stood at the foot of the light-house, night had fallen thick and close, the cliff path was manifestly unsafe, and she paused only long enough to inquire meekly of the custodian the shortest and best way to the village across the moor. His answer was not encouraging, being of this wise: —

"Well, there is n't much of any way to call a road, especially as dark as 't is now; but you see this sandy track cut up by the wheels? Well, follow that along, bearing to the left where it is kind of confused, and about half a mile or so from here you 'll see a little heap of stones at your left, and then you keep that path; and if you can't see no path, why, — unless the fog comes on thicker than I guess it will, — you 'll

see the lights at Sconset, and you 'll kind o' bear away for them."

Mysie looked across the misty waste toward which he pointed, and felt like Christopher Columbus. The world was round, and by voyaging long enough in one direction she must arrive somewhere.

"There are no bogs or ditches for one to fall into, are there?" inquired she, rising from the stone whereon she had briefly rested.

"Oh, no! not unless you get *way* out of your course over there to the right. There 's some ma'sh-land over there by Saul's Hills, Gibbs's Swamp, and the like; but you just bear to the left and make for Sconset lights, and you 'll fetch."

With these instructions Mysie set forth, and presently found herself, so far as outward sense could demonstrate, alone in the world. The sandy track had ceased to glimmer beneath her feet, the village lights were not yet visible; to the left the rise of the bluff cut off the view of the sea, to the right lay a dim and shadowy land across which slowly drifted strange shapes of fog, settling, lifting, creeping, like the phantom-army encamped "beside the Moldau's rushing

stream;" the moon, wan as a watcher's face, struggled against the fog, now peering through its rifts, now swallowed in its depths. Only one thing remained to tell of man; the beacon-light upon the rising land behind shone steadily yet strangely through the fog, which vainly tried to smother it, each ray making as it were a separate effort, and cutting its separate way through the enemy, — so that the effect was of a great central star surrounded by an aureole, the conventional star old painters loved to show as guiding the wise men. But as Mysie, sitting there all alone with the moor and the fog and the night, watched this great star, the drifting mist seemed now to carry it away out over the sea, whose melancholy monotone suited the picture well, now to bring it so near that one could hardly doubt it was advancing, — the tall majestic figure with a glory around its head, like One who walked upon the sea of Galilee. The intense solemnity of the scene was something indescribable; the breadth of all the effects, the grandeur of the unseen ocean, the melancholy of the moors, the sky which mingling with the fog seemed to have come within one's reach, the wan moon, and the great lonely

star made up a world wherein one forgot all smaller things and felt one's self the smallest of all things. One never stays long in such an atmosphere, however, and the transition is often very harsh. This time it was very gentle; the tinkle of a bell muffled in wool, the crop, crop, of many little mouths, a soft stir among the herbage, and the apparition of vague shapes on every side, neither avoiding nor attacking the human creature seated there beside the road, and so proving themselves brought into the covenant of mutual benefit between beast and man, wherein the poor creatures learn to love and trust him who feeds them, that he may ultimately eat them! — a flock of sheep broken loose from their pasture and happy in forbidden grass, albeit not so rich as their own, but flavored with the sense of freedom.

The dream was broken, and Mysie arose from the little heap of stones which she concluded must be the cairn marking the departure of the foot-path from the wheel-track. No path at all was visible in the dim light, — but one has to believe in so many things that are not visible and yet necessary; and so passing to the left of the clump of furze beside the cairn, Mysie walked

on, and by and by perceived that she was following, not so much a path, as the reminiscence of other feet over the grass, until the lights of Sconset shone cheerily in the distance, and the first set of bars propounded the question of climb or crawl to her anxious mind.

After this the rest of the way was pleasant and easy, until about nine o'clock Mysie walked into the parlor where ladies sitting about a kerosene lamp did ric-rac, gaped, and looked at their watches. One pleasantly inquired if she had been walking, and on hearing whither, looked mildly disapproving, and said it was too far, and she had already seen the lighthouse several times. Then everybody went to bed, and that day's joy was past.

The next morning a friend arrived. We have all smiled at the cynic who, when his servant said he would like to step out and see a friend, exclaimed, "A friend? Fetch my hat; I would like to see him, too." But probably nobody except Robinson Crusoe was ever more delighted in seeing a friend than Mysie, when from Levi Coffin's box-wagon there gayly descended, with red lilies in her hand, a young lady as ignorant as herself of ric-rac indeed, but, like her-

self, finding ignorance such bliss that they cared not to be wise, and supplied the void in their lives with talk of other things. The reaction from total apathy was of course excessive and dangerous, culminating in a walk to Tom Never's Head, — the western headland balancing Sankaty on the east; Sconset being the pivot in the middle. Like most crusades, the *motif* of this was admirable, the detail exhausting, the culmination disastrous. The sun blandly remarking to Mysie, "Do you suppose, because you are in a better humor, you can defy *me?*" just pushed away the morning fog and *shone.* The wind held its breath to see the fun; the path lying along Low Beach might as well have lain across that furnace heated "even seven times hotter than before;" the beach-grass, long and tangled, swarmed with all things of a crawly, skippy, venomous nature; and Tom Never's Head, two miles away, presented itself as a glary, unshaded eminence hard to climb, and presenting upon its apex the anomaly of a life-saving station, before reaching which one would be sure to die. At its foot lay a wreck, through whose ancient ribs the waters broke derisively, and at its back lay a swamp, — Tom Never's Swamp, —

where the owls and Tom Never's ghost sensibly shelter themselves during the noonday. Mr. Northrup, in his book about Sconset, gives a very different picture of Tom Never's Head; and it is just as true as this one, the difference being the seamy side and the congregation side of the tapestry. It is nice to see things all round.

"Myra," exclaimed Mysie, "suppose we conclude we have done enough for glory — too much for comfort — and turn back!" Myra, being an eminently quiet and well-mannered young lady, was beginning a highly proper reply, when suddenly the touch of nature common to femininity forced an unconsidered scream from her lips, and pointing at Mysie's skirts, she gasped, "Ticks!"

Undoubtedly that impromptu embroidery, looking as if it were done in brown beads, but with the novel feature in embroidery of a constantly changing pattern, was ticks; and ticks being of that sympathetic and affectionate nature that they never are satisfied to leave any barrier between themselves and their friends, the stupendous problem arose, What proportion does the seen bear to the unseen in the works of Nature?

Hence Myra's shriek, *hinc* — but no; the daily press has used up *hinc illæ lachrymæ*, and has given us nothing to fill the place of the tears but a gape. Of course, a vigorous defence against the foe was at once instituted; but it was like that of Gulliver against the Lilliputians, — numbers and devotion to a purpose, far more than outmatching size and self-conceit. Desperate and rapid flight remained the only hope, and it was adopted. Two or three hours later the comrades, each emerging from her scene of solitary conflict, met in the wind-swept hall, and looked in each other's wan and worn faces.

"I counted mine as I drowned them," said Myra, "and there were a hundred and thirteen."

"I measured mine instead of counting," replied Mysie, not to be outdone. "How much do you fancy a wash-basin holds? Mine is full."

A few hours later a beach-wagon drove up, and two cool, well-dressed, and provokingly comfortable-looking damsels alighted, with the remark, —

"Of course, you are having a lovely time here, but we want to take you back to town with us."

"Had we better go, Myra?" inquired Mysie; "or do you want to stay for a few more excursions to Tom Never's, by way of Low Beach?"

So, as the sun, relenting of his morning cruelty, drew the glory of sunset clouds about his face, and sank toward the western sea, the beach-wagon rolled townward, carrying four light hearts, four merry faces, four restless tongues; and the owls, just preparing for a moonlight flitting across the moor, were driven back to their swamps by peals of laughter and ringing choruses; and Betty and Myra must stop for every red lily, or wild rose, or swamp azalea to be espied with a telescope; and Hattie nearly lost the use of her arms for life, in restraining the iron-mouthed beast who drew the wagon and evidently considered himself the only sensible person of the party; and Mysie, laughing, singing, jesting, and happy as a child just out of school, had yet a quiet glance of recognition for the purpling moors and the dim hollows where already the fog lay ever so lightly, while in her heart was the unspoken greeting which one gives to a dear, dear friend, with whom by and by we shall speak in fullest confidence. As the carriage rolled through New-

town gate, where once was a barrier to keep the sheep then grazing all the moors from coming into town, and where also the one hanging effected in Nantucket took place, the moon, clearing the horizon clouds, shed down her glory upon the old town and the waters clasping her around like a faithful spouse, who sees always the fair object of his early love in her whom the careless world calls old and bygone. A little silence fell upon the merry party as Hattie halted the horse and left time for the picture to impress itself, and then the uneven cobblestones began, and the memorable drive was over.

SCRAP XII.

THE COFFINS.

AND now arrived the three days of the Coffin reunion, bringing an influx of two or three hundred Coffins, — some *nascitur*, some *fit*, but one and all firmly impressed with the idea that Tristram Coffin, and Dionis his wife, invented Nantucket a couple of centuries ago, and that the previous Indians, the contemporary Macys, Folgers, Starbucks, Mayhews, etc., and the subsequent "coofs," "strangers," or "off-islanders," are alike accidental accretions. To this theory the Indians oppose only the pathetic silence of extermination, the coofs accept it carelessly, or set it on the shelf with their other Nantucket curiosities, all pleasantly dubious of origin; but the contemporaries, as represented by their descendants, meet it with a vast and outspoken scorn.

"Tristram Coffin!" exclaimed one individual in a symposium at which Mysie assisted; "why,

what was he but an old fisherman, with his trousers rolled above his knees, digging clams or hauling up his dory like anybody else in those days; while Dionis, whom they make such a fuss about, sold home-made beer in Salisbury, Mass., and is set down in the Town Records there as fined for selling *bad* beer. No, sir! it was Thomas Macy and Edward Starbuck who settled Nantucket, and Tristram Coffin only came along in their wake."

"Oh, if it comes to a question of the principal family on Nantucket," retorted another, "nobody can doubt the claim of the Folgers. Why, when they wanted to survey their land about three years after your Coffins and Macys settled here, they had to send over to the Vineyard and coax Peter Folger to come and do it for them. There was n't a man-jack among them able to do it; why, there was n't one of them could read or write, even!"

But at this statement a groan, a growl, a scream of derision arose from every Coffin and Macy within hearing, with a hubbub of voices deep or shrill, from among which presently issued the calm tones of a serene old Friend of Swain descent.

"That was an unadvised statement, made by a very good but misguided man," said he; "he even printed it upon the map he put forth ten years ago. But it is clear that since the twenty Purchasers and Associates who bought the island of Thomas Mayhew signed their names to their deed of association, they were able to write; and as careful men do not sign what they cannot certify, it is likely they could read."

"And as for the surveying, I believe Folger was as much a miller and builder as he was a surveyor," interposed a feminine Coffin; "and I don't see that grinding corn is any more literary than raising it. And I should like to know how many of us in this room know how to do surveying: and yet I suppose we don't call ourselves very illiterate, do we?"

The last argument was "a clincher," and the meeting broke up harmoniously, well content with having arrived at no conclusion whatever. But the discussion in varied forms and among various groups of people was renewed again and again, with so many arguments upon the Coffin side that one was altogether convinced of the

justice of their claims, until a committee of Folgers, Gardners, Husseys, and the rest flatly contradicted all the Coffin statements, and met their arguments with others exactly as convincing, so that finally one remembered, — was it Sir Walter Raleigh, who in his prison amused himself by writing a history? It was nearly complete, when a fracas in the prison-yard attracted his attention and drew him to the window; the combatants were presently separated and brought back into the common room, when the historian, anxious to discover the rights of the quarrel, "interviewed" the leading persons on each side, but found all the accounts so opposed to each other, and all differing so decidedly from what he thought he had seen, that returning to his cell he tore his manuscript to bits, saying, "Who writes history is writing himself down a liar." Meantime the world goes on, whether Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin — who was born in Boston in 1759, about a century after Tristram and Dionis settled on Nantucket, and who built and endowed a school still flourishing in Nantucket — was actually one of the Tristram-Coffins, or, as the Folgers and Macys say, was merely a childless old man, who fancied leaving a monu-

ment to himself among a people of the same name and possibly the same descent as himself; or whether Tristram dug clams in bare-skin buskins, and Dionis sold bad beer; or whether he resembled the be-ruffled, curled, silken-doubleted cavalier of Charles the Second's period, whose picture was sold as the portrait of Tristram Coffin, during those days of reunion, — still the world goes on!

A great mitigation of party feeling in this most important question is the fact, that, during the two centuries of occupancy, these Nantucket families have married and intermarried in the most intricate manner, until probably any one in any family at the present day might claim about the same connection as does the Rev. Dr. Ewer of St. Ignatius Parish, New York, who, being brought to book for a statement anent Peter Folger's literary pre-eminence printed upon the map of Nantucket, which he has philanthropically surveyed, drawn, and published, with descriptive notes, as a guide to his native island, wittily replied by saying that he could not be supposed likely to disparage any Nantucket blood, since a "quantitative and qualitative analysis" of his own results as follows: —

Silicate of Trott	2	per cent.
Bicarbonate of Burwell	2	"
Protoxide of Swain	3	"
Nitrate of Worth	3	"
Chloride of Cartwright	11	"
Sulphate of Starbuck	11	"
Hydrated Sulphuric Acid of Ewer .	11	"
Superphosphate of Coffin	12	"
Hydrated Deutoxide of Gardner . .	15	"
Aurate of Folger	29	"
Traces of Tobey, Wing, and Macy .	1	"
	100	"

Perhaps one may guess the reverend chemist's private persuasion, by noting the proportion, both quantitatively and qualitatively, given to Folger.

Although the elements frowned most unkindly upon the reunion, it was a very bright and interesting occasion. Coffins from the cardinal extremities of these United States and the Dominion of our dear sister Victoria gathered with much jubilation, and with a fortunate determination not to mind discomfort; for the accommodations of the island being already nearly absorbed by " coofs from the continent," as strangers from the mainland are occasionally described in vigorous vernacular, the Coffins seemed likely to be reduced to the condition of snails, each sleep-

ing in his own "shell" before the appointed season.

The long easterly storm usual in Nantucket during August arrived in the same boat with the Coffins, and affectionately accompanied them in all their excursions, patiently waiting to see the last of them off the island before it went itself. One work of this unbidden guest was to defeat a so-called "pilgrimage" of the clan to the grave of Captain John Gardner, before mentioned, this being also, in all probability, the spot where, or whereabout, Tristram and Dionis laid their weary bones, little guessing the commotion to be made over them two hundred years later. It was a pretty idea, and yet,— ideas belong to eras; and perhaps the era of pedestrian pilgrimages over rough roads to the graves of one's ancestors is a little bygone, and American men are not much in that way, and American women are n't very good walkers, and the grass about those graves is full of ticks; and, on the whole, it is possible the easterly storm was an angel in disguise, and then, — no doubt Captain John Gardner was a hospitable man in his day, but two hundred Coffins for one grave is a good many! So the disap-

pointed pilgrims went to the Methodist church instead, and had a few more speeches and a poem or two, and went away next day saying to each other what a splendid occasion it had been, and to themselves how glad they were it was over. One would not be cynical; but is it not in every one's experience that the pleasures so elaborately prepared for, and so much anticipated in thought and speech, are just a little disappointing when they arrive? You cannot decant your champagne and hand it about to be admired, and sing songs to it, and make speeches about it, and then find the embodied perfume of the first flavor. Choose the pleasures of hope, the pleasures of possession, or the pleasures of memory: you won't get any two of them in perfection.

A dangerous point also in family reunions of this sort is, that the common tie only brings closer home the inevitable differences of politics, religion, interests, and tastes pervading a company gathered from every portion of our so lately dis-United States. The religious element, for instance, among the Coffins was represented by two or three gentlemen whose severely clerical dress suggested the advanced Anglican; by

others of the Congregational body; by Unitarian ministers, one of them certainly a most cultivated and delightful person socially; by Friends, any of them expected to exhort if the Spirit moves; and by a representative female preacher. A conference upon matters of faith, like that between Francis de Sales and the Geneva ministers, would have been a noticeable feature in the programme of exercises, but in the interests of family concord it was omitted.

The Coffins gone away, and the island a little calmed after its astonishment, Mysie pursued her studies of its internal resources, and wandering through the moon-lighted streets one evening, met Hattie, who briskly inquired, —

"Have you seen the dauphin?"

"The prince imperial, do you mean?"

"Dear me, no! The real thing, the last dauphin, who should have been or was Louis XVII."

"Hattie, what *do* you mean?"

"Come with me."

And, turning back a few steps, she mounted one of the peculiar stoops characteristic of Nantucket, and knocked with her knuckles upon a door. A mild and gentle lady presently opened

it, and greeted Hattie in a voice which, like her face, suggested the gentle and restrained bearing peculiar to those born or bred among Friends.

"I have brought my friend to see the dauphin, if you will be so very kind as to present us," said Hattie, with a sly glance at the absolutely mystified Mysie.

The quiet manner of the lady did not betray any appreciation of a jest; but pushing open the door of a room lighted only from the one beyond it, she said, "He is in this parlor. Will you walk in?"

The friends walked in; and looking about her in the dim light, Mysie perceived a child lying in the corner of a sofa, the dark head contrasting with the white dress and pillow. The lady had gone into the other room. "Why, here's a baby, Hattie!" exclaimed she, softly. "We shall wake it, and then there'll be a scene."

"Sa Majesté le roi, Louis XVII.!" announced Hattie, in a tone of sepulchral solemnity, and with the gesture of a gold-stick-in-waiting doing the honors of a royal ante-chamber to a guest.

"What do you mean, you exasperating creature!" again demanded Mysie; and just then

the hostess returned, and, lighting the gas, mildly inquired, —

"Have you seen the dauphin?"

"Yes. I was just presenting my friend," replied Hattie, demurely; and as the lady raised the figure and brought it forward, Mysie perceived that it was a life-sized and most life-like image of a child, perhaps a year old, the peculiar face differing widely from the conventional model of infantile beauty, and bearing the individuality which induces one immediately to declare, "Oh, this is a likeness of somebody, quite evidently." More than this: the little face, with its air of dignity and hereditary hauteur, had decidedly the Bourbon ugliness as transmitted to us in so many portraits of that ill-starred race; and altogether one felt quite ready to accept without salt the story that Captain Jonathan Coffin, sailing away from Nantucket about a hundred years ago, promised his little daughter that he would bring her something different from what any of her playmates could boast, and, looking about him in France, found in a nunnery near Paris this image, modelled by permission from the head of the little dauphin, then about a year old. The good sisters warranted it a likeness;

and the captain, who idolized his little girl, paid something fabulous in price for this unique toy, and brought it home in triumph. The story is so straight and the internal evidence so great, that this relic of the poor child, who with his father paid the debts of the three previous reigns, is an object of most pathetic interest. Several collectors of curios have tried to buy it, and most persons say, "It ought to be in a museum, you know, — in some national collection where, properly authenticated, it would grow more and more valuable;" but Mysie hopes neither of these classes of collectors will have their way. The dauphin, lying carelessly in the corner of a sofa, with a sweet gentle lady to show him as a favor to those calling upon her, and then to lay him aside in the closet or anywhere, is so much more interesting and piquant than he could be in any wax-work show, private or national; and it seems such a shame always to take things out of their own settings and transplant them into unassimilated ones, merely because one wants everything. The poor obelisk in Central Park, for instance! How insulted Cleopatra and Cheops must feel, even in Hades!

Next door to the dauphin's house is another, the home of a still more marvellous thing, and quite as historically interesting in its way. It is popularly called the Smuggler's Hole, and is in a house owned and inhabited by two ladies upon whom one would think nobody could dream of intruding uninvited; but yet there have been so many exceptions to the rule that they have been obliged to learn to say "No" to unauthorized applicants, and it is rather a delicate matter to ask for admittance. Hattie, however, arranged this; and one wet and windy afternoon Mysie went alone, and was received by a lovely woman, with the sweet and grave expression upon her face of one inured to long physical suffering. The old panelling of the parlor, the fireplace, and some family pictures were the first objects of interest; and then going into the hall, the lady opened a closet extending under the great square staircase, and showed how in the back of it a door, once probably masked, but now simply latched, opened into a queer, roomy crypt, built into the great square chimney in such a fashion that no casual observation of the various apartments of the house would suggest any space unaccounted for. This closet

had once an opening into the parlor by a sliding panel; and the most eagerly sought refugee would have been as safe here as in any Priest's Chamber of a mediæval castle. Indeed, the present owners of the house did not discover their treasure for many years after their first occupancy, and then quite by accident.

"The ceiling of this closet is the floor of the place you have come to see," said the sweet voice of the guide, glancing up at the dark boarding overhead.

"This is not the Smuggler's Hole, then?" asked Mysie, with a smile.

"No, that is still to explore;" and leading the way up the roomy staircase, the lady pointed to a window high in the wall over the middle landing, saying, —

"That is the window of the place; and they say the goods hidden there were passed through the window and out at this window over the front door, and so down into a cart, by a rope and blocks. But nobody knows now; for if such things were done, they were naturally kept secret, and those who died left no record of their proceedings."

"Then it is not known just who the smug-

glers were? It was, perhaps, before your family owned the house?" suggested Mysie, tentatively. The air of quiet reserve so characteristic of Nantucket gentlefolk deepened a little, but very courteously came the reply, —

"Nothing is known positively about the smugglers, or even if there were any smugglers. One of our visitors suggested that the closets were made for storing and ripening wine; he said the warmth of the chimney was just what was needed."

She smiled a little in suggesting this fancy, and then quietly added, —

"It all happened before our family bought the house, and nothing I suppose can ever be positively proved; but you know in the time of the Revolution, and again in 1812, Nantucket was very much exposed to British depredations, and even violence, so that it would be very natural for people to contrive safe hiding-places for their property, or for themselves and their friends. There was a very handsome girl over at Tuckernuck in Revolutionary times, — one of the Gardners, I think, — and her father hid her all one day under a heap of flax in the garret, because a British cruiser was hovering about the

island. If he had had a smuggler's hole in his house now, she might have been both safer and more comfortable."

So speaking, the sweet lady led the way up the stairs, and after showing various quaint and pleasant chambers filled with old furniture and heirloom draperies on the second floor, up again to a great old-fashioned garret, such as one so seldom sees now, and such as will never be seen by any one when the present old houses are gone.

"Here is one hiding-place," said she, going to the corner, and pulling away some boards showed a darkness beyond, its extent or nature perfectly undistinguishable.

Mysie, vainly peering in, asked, "What is it?"

Her companion laughed as she replied, "Indeed, I don't know. I never had courage or curiosity to explore it; but they say it extends out over a porch at the side of the house, a place no one would ever dream of investigating; and when these boards are laid in place no one would think of raising them to look beneath. But here is the real cave, or, as most people call it, the Smuggler's Hole, — perhaps, meaning *hold;* for it is a good deal like a ship's hold."

She raised a trap-door in the floor as she spoke, and revealed a steep and narrow flight of stairs leading down into what might have been Tartarus itself, for darkness and gloom.

"Do you care to go down?" asked the lady; "I have never been myself. It looks so black and is so close and deep."

But Mysie, with a good deal of Thomas in her composition, liked to see everything for herself; and leaving all impedimenta on the garret floor, clambered down the ladder-like stairs until she stood in a sort of well, with worm-eaten wooden shelves at one side and the worn bricks of the chimney at the other. Some crumbling mummies of vegetables remained upon the shelves, showing that the place with all the rest of its uses had served the humble purpose of a vegetable cellar.

"Those things have been there for fifty years at least," said the hostess, "and have, I suppose, survived the hands that laid them there. Won't you have one for a relic?"

So Mysie took an onion, the one of all earth's fruits most connected with mummies and catacombs and mysteries; for did not the children of Israel, with the milk and honey of Canaan

and the grapes of Eshcol in promise, turn back to mourn for the onions of Egypt? Cheops, Sesostris, Cleopatra, the sculptor of the Sphinx, the architect of Karnak, they all ate onions and were not afraid! It is only we weaklings of the nineteenth century who timidly avoid, or in stealth and cowardice indulge in, them. So Mysie, who like most persons especially admires the virtues she does not claim, cherishes that fifty-year old onion from the Smuggler's Hole, but would far rather die than consume a fresh one. Cleopatra chose both death *and* onions; but red-haired people are generally courageous.

So ended the summer campaign, — the visit "in season" of this off-islander to Nantucket; and a few days later she departed with the immortal Oliver Twist's craving for "More!" strong upon her.

PART II.

NANTUCKET OUT OF SEASON.

SCRAP I.

THE SUMMER BOARDER.

SOME persons are fond of studying the past by reconstructing from fragments extinct forms of life, — leviathan, mastodon, ichthyosaurus, and the like; and although these scientists fight freely enough upon some points of their conclusions, they all seem to agree upon one; namely, that the earth must have been very differently prepared to meet the needs of these gentlemen from what it is in our day, and that ichthyosaurus and men could not have lived comfortably together.

But some other persons, leaving the dead past to bury its dead, prefer to study the future in the new forms of life gradually developing under their eyes, and find amusement in picturing the changes, physical and psychical, needed to adapt the world as a habitat of the coming creature.

Conspicuous among these developing forms

of curious life is the Summer Boarder. It is on the surface a "sport," as the botanists say, of the order Man; but a little analysis, even without the aid of the microscope, develops differences already wide, and rapidly widening as the new species expands and becomes established. Man and woman in their ordinary condition may be considered in various relations of life, but just now we will confine ourselves to those manifestations ordinarily called gentleman and lady. True, these terms are indefinite, and cover a sliding scale of qualifications, ranging down from those claimed by you, sir, and you, madam, to those of the "lady at the back door, mum, wanting some broken victuals." But ordinarily it is conceded that the gentleman and lady are human beings educated to conceal that inherent selfishness, greed, disregard of the wishes or tastes of others, and general belief in the principle, —

> "Let him take who has the power,
> And let him keep who can," —

which everybody brings into the world with him or her. This principle is instinctive and very subtile, especially among the more cultivated

classes; and a great many very pretty specimens of self-delusion and delicious phariseeism are to be found by the industrious student. A small class, a very small class, of persons recognizing these ugly traits in themselves under every specious form of disguise, set themselves to uproot the weeds, and supply their places by certain sweet and lovely exotics, such as charity, meekness, patience, and long-suffering: but like other exotics these are of slow growth and delicate habit, requiring constant protection and nurture, lest the indigenous weeds should spring up and choke them out: a successful cultivator of this sort is probably the most perfect specimen of gentleman or lady this earth can produce. Another and far larger class comprises the persons who have been trained from birth and also inherit from progenitors a code of manners closely imitating the spontaneous action of the exotic-growers. They give up the best seat, the best dish, the choice of driving or sailing, the last word in the argument, and various other privileges dear to the creature *homo*, because politeness demands that they should, and they have learned in perfection the well-bred gambler's axiom, "Pay, and look pleasant." But

this restraint being enforced, only endures for the occasion, and is compensated by very disagreeable and bitter remarks in private, and sometimes by a sly ill-turn done to the party to whom the well-mannered person has sacrificed itself. In ordinary life we thus have three varieties of lady and gentleman, — those who put down self and seek the happiness of others before their own, from high Christian principle; those who prefer their neighbor to themselves almost as assiduously as the first class, but merely from good breeding; and the third who do *not* prefer their neighbor to themselves, but delude themselves in many subtile ways into fancying they are quite right not to do so.

The stratum of humanity not calling itself lady and gentleman may be similarly divided, and is a still more curious and instructive study, holding in the first class men who will in their shirt-sleeves and cowhide boots do deeds of chivalry and show a delicate care of women worthy of Bayard, with feminines knowing not grammar and eating with their knives, but of lives fragrant with the love of God and devotion to their neighbor; the second class who ingenuously say, "I never would have give up

in the world, but the folks was all listening, and I knew they'd talk if I didn't;" and the third class who knock each other down, or plant their elbows in each other's ribs to gain precedence, snatch the food out of each other's hands if they are hungry, and swear and vituperate freely if they are offended.

The Summer Boarder, however, is not ordinarily grown from the latter classes, or if so, its habitat has not been discovered by the present explorer; the new species is, in fact, largely the outgrowth of the second group of the first class, although borrowing freely from the first and third. But it is to be noted that the first group of the first species, being as it were the most genuine of the three, suffers the least change under any circumstances, and does not develop as fully as could be wished into the Summer Boarder even under the most favoring circumstances, — as, for instance, a crowded summer resort with such paucity of accommodation that it is only by bold and persistent warfare any one may acquire or keep a carriage, a dry bathing-house, a good seat at the table, unchipped cups, the attention of servants, or the earliest services of the laundress. Our first group, under these circum-

stances, show an unfortunate stubbornness about becoming anything other than ladies and gentlemen, and incur much the same fate as their prototypes of the Terror, — those debonair ladies and gentlemen who, disdaining to struggle with *dames du halle* and their kindred, relinquished all their outward goods, but retained even in the Conciergerie a gay courage, an infinite refinement and courtesy, and a quiet contempt of tribunal, sentence, and guillotine, which gave their murderers a great deal more annoyance than the stolen goods gave them pleasure.

No, the Summer Boarder is not commonly drawn from this class; and yet, alas! as Lucifer, prince among angels, became king of devils, a star does occasionally fall to earth in the shape of meteoric cinders; and one sometimes recognizes in a Summer Boarder a perverted specimen of Class I., Group I.

The Summer Boarder, then, whencesoever drawn, is a new variety of the order Man. He or more universally she lays aside at once, in arriving upon the arena (for this exhibition is actively competitive), all those restraints which under ordinary circumstances limit the exhibi-

tion of the natural instincts enumerated a little further back. The Summer Boarder neither feels nor feigns the slightest preference of his neighbor over himself; but calmly securing all that is desirable within his reach, casts a malevolent eye upon such matters as the neighboring Summer Boarder has secured for *him*self. A lady of this description, for instance, arriving at a crowded watering-place with a party of friends, suggested their pausing on the way to the hotel to look at an object of interest, while she hastened on by herself and secured the only desirable room. She would not have thought of such discourtesy in her city home; but she had become a Summer Boarder, and her course was quite natural. Another specimen seats herself in a chair at the *table d'hote*, and when the possessor arrives, looks blankly unconscious of the usurpation; and when appealed to by the hostess declares her intention of keeping it. Another, and this one a male specimen, takes the back seat in the carriage, leaving a lady to seat herself with her back to the horses, and grow faint and sick before his eyes. It is characteristic of the Summer Boarder, when grouped in the parlor or upon the veranda of a Summer Boarding-

house, to stare stonily at a new-comer, especially if it be a lady, and alone, and on no account to offer any little courtesy,— as a seat, a fan, a remark about the heat, or information where the landlady may be found. If the stranger ventures a remark or an inquiry, the Summer Boarders either receive it in staring silence, or look from one to the other, as if asking, "Did this person, not having presented letters of introduction, speak to you, or to me?" Usually, in the end, the oldest and grimmest specimen of the group tenders a reply, with much the same air one might give alms to a beggar suspected of small-pox. If the stranger remains waiting in the room or on the veranda, the Summer Boarders draw together and converse in very low tones, occasionally putting up a hand or a fan to screen their remarks from the stranger, — suggesting the suspicion that she is trying to overhear the conversation. If a group of strangers enter the room, conversation is suspended, and the entire clump of Summer Boarders turn and attentively watch and listen to the new-comers, occasionally turning expressive glances of derision, wonder, inquiry, and the like upon each other; and before the new-comers are out

of ear-shot, a buzz of comment and inquiry arises, quite reminding one of some of the African explorers' account of the conduct of Ashantees who never before had seen a white man.

A great deal more detail concerning this new variety of *homo* might be brought forward, but Mysie refrains. It is on the whole a melancholy subject, and not to be forced upon the attention of those bright and happy souls who, by the care of parents and blest conditions of life, have grown up unconscious of the Summer Boarder, or only hearing of him as they do of Kaffirs, Kurdmen, and Cannibals. Dear innocent souls, remain in the bliss of ignorance while you may! But those stronger and more restless souls who cannot let the Sphinx alone, and must be forever scratching the surface of the Russian to see if there is a Tartar underneath, — those Adams and Eves who turn from the innocent bread-fruit of Paradise and demand the apples of the Tree of Knowledge, — those who wish to dissect, micro-size, and classify the Summer Boarder, will find an excellent field of observation and some splendidly developed specimens at Nantucket during the season; that is, during July, August, and

part of September. The growth is abundant, the characteristics strongly marked, the conditions unusually favorable; for not more than half the persons thronging the island during the last two years could be comfortably accommodated, and there are few places where good humor, courtesy, and a contented spirit, or their reverse, find more opportunity to flourish. Come, then, and study your kind, O optimist! but beware of becoming what you study!

The Summer Boarder, and the innumerable army in which he has descended upon Nantucket, is still an object of curiosity and doubt to the calm and eminently conservative spirit of Nantucket. That he is profitable, there is no doubt; and Nantucket gently makes him as profitable as possible, by ransacking garret and cellar and the top-shelf of the pantry for all the broken-legged chairs, cracked-top tables, earthen willow-ware, such as our grandmothers used in their kitchens, and pressed glass in various shapes, — all which articles are greedily bought at ludicrous prices by such summer boarders as presumably possess no family antiquities, and have not carried their Keramic studies very far. Nantucket is quite right and

perfectly honest, for each purchaser has eyes, hands, and should have judgment of his own. If he has not, Nantucket has studied the art of sheep-shearing for many years, and does it very skilfully and pleasantly.

But Nantucket, like many other gentle and silent entities, is very shrewd; and although confessing freely that the Summer Boarder is profitable, she perceives and is keenly annoyed by such of his faults as touch herself,—as, for instance, his conviction that money buys everything, even the Dauphin, and heir-loom silver; his intrusiveness, his noisiness and late hours, his general air of taking possession in the name of "big I" of what may or may not belong of right to "little u;" his ignorance of the island code of manners and speech, of the respective claims of island families and names, of traditions, of genealogy, of maritime matters, and of a thousand "other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." The first flight — the heralds of the army of summer boarders — were received a few years ago by Nantucket with courteous hospitality, and made welcome in homes as refined and conservative as those of Old Virginia, or Eastern Massachu-

setts generally. But the Summer Boarder himself soon changed all that; and to-day Nantucket is hard to find, and harder to come at when found. She has closed her doors about her, and either remains very quiet, or entertains her own relatives and friends in a rigid exclusiveness extremely nice to see. A common form of salutation is, —

"I am so glad to see you! I never should have known you were here if you had not called! There are so many strangers on the island that I keep very much at home, and depend upon my friends to come and see me without formality."

All this knowledge of the Summer Boarder, — sad and heavy as most knowledge of humanity is, upon one side at least, — Mysie found written upon her mental tablets, as in the first days of September she sat upon Jethro Coffin's grave in the Old North Burying-ground, and took stock of the summer's gains. So sitting, she became oppressed with a crushing sense of ignorance as to Nantucket and Nantucket people.

"I have been a Summer Boarder, and they have n't let me know them," said she, turning to

Jethro's headstone, which only replied, "All men must die, and so did I."

"Yes; but before *I* die I will see Nantucket, and I will know Nantucket people," retorted Mysie; and with that resolve in mind went home next day to Boston.

SCRAP II.

REAL NANTUCKET.

IT was early in November that Mysie carried her scheme of seeing Nantucket "out of season," Nantucket *pur et simple*, into execution. The contrast to "in season" began in finding somewhere to stay; for the very Nantucketers who had most patiently entertained the Summer Boarder during his appointed period were most resolute in having nothing to do with him when that period was over. However, the same friendly home which had sheltered Mysie as a pure matter of business during the summer, at last graciously accepted her as a favor during November,—and so that was settled. The second difference appeared in buying a ticket and inquiring hours of transit; for the out-of-season tickets cost nearly twice as much as the in-season or excursion tickets, and the train and boat no longer made any especial effort at connection.

"Decidedly the Summer Boarder finds advantages the private individual loses," mused Mysie, as she wore away the hours at Wood's Holl with a novel, and with such refreshment as the station offered in place of dinner. And yet the discomfort and solitude filled her with exulting visions of a Nantucket purified from Summer Boarder and no longer impregnable. The boat arrived, and Mysie with one lady passenger embarked, without pushing or being pushed, and with no unseemly struggle for seats, since accommodation for a hundred lay at the disposal of two. The sea was rough, the wind was high, the sky was gray, and the whole forward deck was washed with spray; the contrast with the summer sea, summer breeze, summer sky, was sharp, and to Mysie most cheering. There, were repose and idleness; here, strength and action: there, the spectacle of a people to whom work is life, and life is work, deliberately turning its back on work so far as work means use, and giving itself over to the fatiguing and disheartening work called pleasure, inducing in the mind of the philanthropist a vast pity not unmingled with that grim satisfaction even a philanthropist feels in the consciousness of superior wisdom;

here, on the other hand, were laborers of one sort and another, simply using this boat as a means of transit to and from their labors with no more thought of their conveyance than has the artisan who, tin-pail in hand, steps on a street-car that he may the sooner arrive at his shop. The lady passenger was a Nantucket merchant returning home with her winter stock of toys and Christmas goods, and in the intervals of walking the deck, protected by ulster and heavy shawl, Mysie sat with her in a sunny shelter and discussed island folk and island ways very satisfactorily. It was long past dark when the melancholy voice of the bell-buoy swaying on the heavy sea announced the entrance of the harbor, and presently the boat rounding Brant Point lay up to her wharf so snugly one might fancy she was glad of the shelter and the prospect of a night's rest. One or two courageous hackmen replaced the summer swarm, and Mysie was really pleased to think of the surprise she must give them in walking off the boat, when they could not in the calm light of reason have looked for a fare. The old home was ready for her; the sweet old lady, the handsome and gracious hostess, and the baby with the

rose-bud face, each giving welcome in her own fashion, and the cosey round tea-table uniting the welcome of all.

The next day Mysie took possession of the Nantucket she had seen dimly outlined through a fog of Summer Boarder in July and August, and found it all that she had hoped, more than she had expected. The streets were empty and quiet, the few pedestrians briskly going about their business; nobody lounging, nobody looking in at shop-windows, nobody staring vacantly about in search of some indefinite wonder. Several of the shops were closed, for Nantucket people do not buy bric-a-brac, nor care to contemplate neighbor Folger's old table and andirons, having similar articles in their own garrets; neither do busy people in their own town much encourage venders of cakes, candies, ice-cream, and peanuts, so that this class of merchants take their own holiday during the off-season, either going on "the continent" to visit their friends, or retiring into private life and resting in change of work. Wishing to buy some sharks'-teeth ornaments, and finding the shop where they had been displayed closed, Mysie with some difficulty traced the *marchande* to her own home,

where she found her engaged in bread-making. With the usual kind politeness of a real Nantucketer, she left her own occupations and sat down to entertain the stranger, whom she treated as a guest rather than a customer, giving quite an amusing account of the way in which she first suggested to some boys of her acquaintance the extracting and cleansing of sharks' teeth, and their amazement at finding them merchantable articles. She then got them mounted in various forms, by a relative of hers, a remarkably gifted man, who has succeeded in more, and more varied, avocations than one could believe who had not studied New England as developed in Nantucket. Just now there were no sharks' teeth mounted; but if the lady would like the teeth as they were, Mrs. F. believed she had a few stowed away in a chest up garret. Mysie was sorry to give the trouble, etc., but without waiting for more the hostess sped away, and was presently heard dragging heavy boxes on the garret floor, and evidently taking more trouble to gratify a stranger's whim than another sort of dealer would for a sale of twenty dollars' value. In the end she would have given the sharks' teeth "and welcome," accepting finally

merely what she had paid the boy for them, "seeing that it 's out of season," — a fact some persons would have cited as excuse for a double charge.

Friend James's tin-shop remained open, and a cosey seat by the stove proved as inviting as the summer airiness and greenery of the place had been. What a picture Rembrandt would have made of that great rambling shop, with its piles of curious *débris*, its strong lights and deep shadows, and the noble head and stalwart, though stooping form of the old man at his work beside the window, the pale sunlight on his wintry locks, and the shrewd, kindly eyes glancing up at the visitor as he propounded some knotty polemical problem or reply. One of Nature's noblemen, indeed; and yet owing something, as one must believe, to that careful genealogical chart at home, and the silent consciousness of responsibility to the past as well as to the present. The barber's shop was not closed either; and Mysie, after peeping in at the window and seeing the coast clear, entered and had both a good look at the fascinating yet terrible picture of the Flagellation saved from the burning Italian convent, and a little chat with its interesting pro-

prietor, who has a story of his own, if he chooses to tell it, beginning "before the war." The post-office also was open, and nothing on the whole island was so refreshing as to miss the swarm of people who in the season pack this place and crowd around its doors at mail-time; those who have not a box of their own or a right in somebody else's forming two queues, — one of men, the other of women; the latter, as the postmaster ruefully affirms, much more unwilling to observe other people's rights than the former; and not only here, but everywhere in this our dear land of freedom, it is a painful and patent fact that women are more lawless, more frankly selfish, and more personally rude to each other than men. Perhaps this is one result of the universal petting American women grow up to receive as their right. No men in the world are so thoroughly chivalrous to women, irrespective of age, condition, or attractiveness, as American men; and it is really touching to see, and to prove by travelling alone through the rougher and less cultivated regions of our States, how men the rudest, the least refined, and sometimes the least respectable from a severely moral standpoint, will put the woman's safety, com-

fort, even whims, before their own correspondent needs, not as a sacrifice, but quite as a matter of course. Foreigners of various nationalities are more deferential and polished of manner, no doubt; but if a woman alone and unprotected in an emergency needs advice and championship, let her seek it at the hands of first an American, next an Englishman. The first will give it as he would to his sister; the second, as to a helpless creature he is bound to protect, but from whom he hopes no claims of acquaintanceship will accrue unless a proper introduction can be subsequently obtained.

And, coming back to the point by way of a curve, this habit of being petted has made its mark upon American women, developing certain charming characteristics of confidingness, frankness, and the desire to please, and certain very uncharming characteristics of exactingness, petulance, indolence, and an assurance of manner piquant and delightful in some cases, intolerable in others, — especially perhaps in a queue. Well! spoiled children have their charms and their faults, and it is quite just that they who spoil them should be the sufferers.

Pursuing her investigations, Mysie discovered

that Dionis was laid up in ordinary for the winter, her dismal shriek giving place to the wintry wind howling across the moors in prophecy of a storm.

"How do you get to Surf-side without the railroad?" inquired she of an ancient and fish-like wanderer around the deserted station.

"Same way as we did afore we ever see a railroad," replied he, with a friendly grin: "foot it, or hire a team, or get a lift in somebody else's."

The wharves had an oddly deserted look, and the dark waters leaped higher about them, preparing for the winter storms, in which they often rise and take back the territory man has stolen from them. All the pretty yachts and row-boats filling the harbor in season had disappeared, safely housed until spring; wood-piles and other wharf lumber were cleared away lest the sea should clear them, as it occasionally has done; the doors of warehouses and offices looking upon the harbor, which had been in summer so pleasant and hospitable a resort, were closed; and the "warm men" of Nantucket gathered about the stoves inside, smoking many pipes, and telling slow, garrulous stories of the

old time, or uttering oracular prophecies concerning the new.

The Captains' Room was flourishing with even more vivacity than in the summer; for closed doors, a good fire, and less of life in the streets conduced to increased sociability.

Passing by the Custom House one day, soon after twelve o'clock, the hour when the captains dine, Mysie was invited to view the Captains' Room, and stepped in with a good deal of the feeling of the girl in the fairy story, who went to keep house for the big bear, the little bear, and the least bear of all. Not that the captains are bearish of demeanor,— not in the least so! But they are big and burly and hirsute as a rule, and this room is their own exclusive domain. Except, however, a very heavy atmosphere compounded of tobacco, boots, and wet woollen clothes, there was nothing at all terrible in the Captains' Room; four-and-twenty roomy wooden arm-chairs stood about the floor, a few prints of favorite vessels hung upon the walls, as the portraits of beloved racers in a horsey man's apartment, or pictures of the saints in that of a devotee; a big stove stood in the midst of a Sahara of sand in the middle of the room, and the wintry sun

shone in at some of the four windows in a reckless, jolly sort of fashion quite peculiar.

The representatives of the *ancien régime* tell you that in the palmy days of Nantucket, when she was the third important port of the United States, and her hundreds of ships poured gold by the bushel into the quiet coffers of her wealthy men, there was another club-room called "The House of Lords," where the captains did not presume to enter unless summoned, for this was the resort of the owners and controllers of the whaling interest,— men who said to a captain, "Do this," and he did it. But the whales, the whalers, the owners and their wealth have all passed away together, and the "House of Lords" has become but a memory and a regret; while the hard-handed old captains, each with his snugly invested little fortune and his *otium cum dignitate*, survive, and keep up their club with all the ponderous joviality of better times.

It was Mysie's privilege, in these autumnal days, to be admitted to many homes and to talk with many persons whom the Summer Boarder may not hope to reach; and the quiet perfume of antiquity and conservatism hanging round both homes and persons was like the

scent of dried roses in a long-closed cabinet, or of box-plants in a still summer noon as one saunters through the old, old garden of a deserted country home. A charming lady, quick and bright, and full of anecdote and reminiscence, in spite of many years and very frail health, made her welcome both at her house in town and at her cottage in Sconset, where she drove out to pass the few days of St. Martin's summer, unusually soft and bright this year. And here Mysie would pathetically protest against the popular error of styling every warm day after September 1 the Indian summer. No, dear friends, you really must not yield to this temptation! it is doing despite both to tradition and the calendar. The Indian summer is the old English St. Martin's summer, and dates from his feast of November 11. A few days' grace one way or the other may be allowed for the arrival of that delicious week; but it cannot, it never did, it never will, come in September or October. *C'est une affaire finie!*

To this dear and gracious lady Mysie referred the stories her mother had told her of Nantucket fifty years ago: its hospitality and gayety, and its severity of Quaker discipline,—

all mingled so harmoniously. And with the strange thrill of one who suddenly discovers that a familiar parchment is a palimpsest, and carries another story under the familiar characters, she heard yet fuller details of her mother's girlhood, of the dances and the squantums, and the moonlight drives in the box-wagons (then Nantucket's only carriages), and the love affairs, and jealousies and quarrels, rising from nothing yet ending in the dividing for all time of two hearts, as fond and foolish, as weak and strong, as the hearts of youth and maid to-day, of any true lovers who have madly flung away their own happiness within the last four-and-twenty hours.

Going home in the frosty moonlight after an evening with this friend, Mysie felt as if she carried a bouquet of pansies, rue, and rosemary, plucked from a beloved grave. But every visit was not like this; and many a merry story and many an interesting reminiscence this lady had in store, and freely gave to the visitor, who still, Oliver-like, cried "More!"

Another old lady, whom everybody called Grandma, was an inexhaustible treasury of anecdote and history, and had such a vivid and dramatic way of telling her stories that one felt

as if the whole scene were passing before one's eyes. Her husband had been a captain, and all that she said had a strong sea-flavor, augmented by a great many maritime phrases, as natural to her as ordinary English to most of us. One of these stories will never again be possible on Nantucket, for its factors have passed away. It is this:—

Toward midnight of one of those summer evenings when the darkness seems to become a palpable and oppressive substance, one of Grandma's relatives arrived at the house with news that there was sudden illness in his family, and her presence was much desired. She immediately rose and began to make ready, when the young man added that he still must go for the doctor, but would come back if needed and escort her; but the brave old lady scoffed at the idea of escort or protection being needed, and after a while set out for her walk of a mile and a half into the lonely outskirts of the town, picking her way among the cobbles and sand-ruts of the way by aid of a lantern. She had not gone very far from the centre of the town when a curious sound attracted her attention, growing louder and more distinct, yet less intelligible, at

every moment. Pausing and listening intently, she grew more and more puzzled; it was not the distant beat of the surf upon the South Shore, it was not the wash of the tide sweeping around Brant Point, it was not the plaintive note of the bell-buoy, nor the rustling of leaves in Neighbor Coffin's garden, and yet it resembled all of these. And every moment increased both sound and mystery.

"Why did n't you turn and run home as fast as you could go?" asked Mysie, at this point of the narrative. Grandma regarded her in mild astonishment.

"What should I want to do that for? Nantucket women ain't brought up to run away, any more than their men are. No, I just kept up as near the town as I could; for I knew if there was any trouble I could hail the watchman and have help, and the night was so still he 'd be sure to hear; and I knew there were n't any Indians left except poor old Quary, and I never *was* afraid of spirits. So I kept along, singing a hymn and wondering if the Newtown road had n't been pieced out somehow and I never heard of it. But fast as I walked the noise came closer and closer, and by and by it was close behind, and

out of the corner of my eye I could see something white that kept ranging up alongside and then dropping out of sight, until at last it came close to, and a cold wet touch on my hand made me drop my lantern. Luckily it did n't go out, and I picked it up before it hardly reached the ground, and faced round swinging it over my head and calling out, 'Come on, and show your colors, whoever you be! You can't scare me.' There was n't any answer just at first, but I could see that the whole road behind and on each side of me was full of white things surging up and down, just like the breakers out on the Rips; and for a minute I felt — well, a little queer, maybe; but before I had time to get scared, the old fellow heading the fleet gave back my hail with a 'B-a-a-a!' that most took me off my feet. Then I just stood there and laughed; and if I had got a little excited over it all, the good laugh carried it off and left me as calm as a clock."

"But who were they, after all?" asked Mysie, bewildered.

"Who were they?" repeated Grandma, impatiently. "Why, 't was the Town Flock. Somebody had left the Newtown gate open, and the

Town Flock had come in same as they always did when they got the chance, to look after the neighbors' gardens and fodder stacks; and then seeing my lantern swinging along, they thought maybe it was some one coming to feed them. Or — nobody can tell what they thought; only if a sheep sees anything bright and glittery he 'll run after it; and where one goes another will follow, until the last of the flock don't even know what they 're running after, — just following on because the rest do. There 's folks like that in some parts of the world, I 've heard."

"I 've heard so, too. And how did you get rid of your followers?"

"I did n't. I hurried some after that, and they came pattering along close beside and behind me, until I turned in where I was going. There was a garden in front of the house, and a narrow walk up through it, with a low fence each side; the first sheep came along up the walk and up the steps till their noses touched the door itself; and as many more as could crowded in after, but luckily they did n't think of jumping over the fences into the garden. So the last thing I saw as I went in was this long, narrow strip of white, coming up from the

road, and the road itself full of ghosts as far as I could look. I bid them all a kind good-night, blew out my lantern, and went in; and once in, I found a plenty to think about besides sheep, so I did n't say anything. But next morning, when I went home, I smiled to see how the dusty road was all marked up with little hoof-prints; somebody had driven them out and shut the gate before that, however."

Naturally, after hearing this anecdote, Mysie was interested in the sheep question, and found it one of the integral portions of Nantucket's history. The moors, or "commons," as they are popularly called, are especially adapted for sheep-grazing, both in a positive and negative sense,—the short, dry herbage making particularly fine mutton, and the soil seeming incapable of raising anything else. Hence, from the earliest days, sheep have been a specialty of Nantucket, and a source of wealth rivalling the whale. To thoroughly elucidate the sheep question is reserved for some Macaulay, Carlyle, or Mackenzie of the future, for it involves not only the chief land-industry of this remarkable island, but its chief political economy, its municipal struggles, its angry passions, its still smoulder-

ing feuds, its family quarrel decently guarded from the stranger's eye. Suffice it to say that the moors were once owned in common, any man using them for grazing ground as he would; and subsequently they were nominally divided into shares, each shareholder having the right to graze a fixed number of sheep without boundaries. There were several favorite pastures for these flocks, one of them lying just outside the part of the village called Newtown; and here a gate was placed across the road to keep what was called the Town Flock from coming in and devastating the gardens by night. Beside this gate also stood the only gallows ever erected on Nantucket, and here the solitary execution took place; the culprit was an Indian, taken red-handed in the act of murder, and whether the gallows was a salutary terror to the sheep as well as the Indians is not mentioned in history.

The Indians soon died out, but the sheep increased and multiplied until they were counted by thousands; and for a century or so an idyllic and pastoral Shearing Feast was kept by the entire population, who, on the first Monday in June, migrated to the ponds near the western end of the island, whither the sheep had been

previously driven up and penned. Miacomet Plain, with its chain of ponds,— one of them still called Washing Pond,— then became for three days an encampment of tents and booths, where busy matrons and merry girls cooked such savory dishes as were at that time dear to the island epicure, or set forth those daintier viands prepared at home. The fathers, husbands, brothers, and sweethearts meantime washed the sheep, lightening their labor with a great deal of rough play and many practical jokes among themselves, and returned them to the pens to dry until next day, when the shearing began; and let us be glad Mr. Bergh was not obliged to watch its progress, since seldom did a sheep escape his shearer's hands without one or more patches of tar to show where the scissors had gone deeper than the fleece. The next thing was to re-brand each animal with its owner's initial or emblem; and then the shearing was over, and the encampment broke up, the lads and lasses finishing out the holiday with a surreptitious dance in town,— for these were the days of Quaker supremacy, when dancing, music, cards, and most modes of amusement were strictly forbidden. But like most efforts to suppress human nature, these

laws were only fully honored by those who had no longer the temptation to break them; and the young Quakers danced, sang, and frolicked in their generation very much as their too-liberal descendants do to-day.

A little poem, from the collection previously quoted, gives a vivid picture of the simple and pastoral pleasures connected with the shearing-season, and may be preserved as a memorial of scenes forever passed away: —

THE HARPER.

BY C. F. B.

Old Ocean's stormy barrier passed,
The Harper gained the beach at last;
He seized his harp, he leaped ashore,
He played his wild refrain once more, —
The same old sixpence, "tew and tew,"
Echoed the shores of bleak Coatue:
'T was "tew I can't, and tew I can,"
All the way to the shearing-pen!

Onward but not unheeded went
The harper old; his form was bent,
His doublet wool, his hose were tow,
His pantaloons cut so-and-so:
The people gazed, the coofs admired,
And many stranger things transpired;

Coppers from many a hand were wrung
As, wading through the sand, he sung:
'T is "tew I can't, and tew I can,"
All the way to the shearing-pen!

The streets are passed, the plain is reached
Whose uniqueness was ne'er impeached,—
Dearer to him than Marathon,
Or any plain beneath the sun;
Dearer by far than hymns or psalms
The bleating of those new-born lambs;
Dearer than all that homespun strain
The harper wildly sings amain:
'T is "tew I can't, and tew I can,"
All the way to the shearing-pen!

The harper seats him 'neath a tent
Made of a mainsail patched and rent;
The curious folk, of every hue,
Looked on as though they 'd look him through.
He signifies his mad intent
To drink — of the limpid element;
He eats a large three-cornered bun,
And then, his slight refection done,
He takes his harp, and plays again
The same mysterious wild refrain:
'T is "tew I can't, and tew I can,"
All the way to the shearing-pen!

Soon as the harper old appeared
A ring was formed, a space was cleared;
Three maidens clad in spotless white,
Three nice young men, all dandies quite,

Impatient for the dance are seen
On the brown-sward, — some call it *green.*
No light fantastic toes belong
To any of *that* joyous throng,
They 're all prepared to reel it strong.
The harper rosins well his bow,
The very cat-gut 's in a glow,
With "tew I can't, and tew I can,"
All the way to the shearing-pen!

. . . . . .

The sheep are sheared, the reel is done,
The harper back to coofdom gone;
My lay is closed, you 'll think it meet, —
Pleasures are always short when sweet:
'T was so when first the world begun,
'T will be so when the world is done.
Who was the harper? what his strain?
Wait till you hear him play again:
'T is "tew I can't, and tew I can,"
All the way to the shearing-pen!

1844.

But the serpent of variance invaded this pretty pastoral, as he mostly does all pretty scenes; and it was gradually perceived that many proprietors of the common land pastured a great many more sheep than they were entitled to, and a good many pasturers were not proprietors at all. Ten thousand sheep were too many for the pasturage at any rate, and

while every year the flocks increased, the feed diminished. In this emergency, the legitimate shareholders proposed to abolish the privilege of the commons, and let every man enclose his portion if he would; or, if not, remove his sheep. Here was the Apple of Discord thrown upon the municipal Board with a vengeance; and from the hour of its first appearance to some few years back, that bitter fruit sufficed to feed the whole island. The bitterest opposers of the measure were naturally the men who either owned no land at all, or who had so overstocked it as to convert their innocent white sheep into the blackest of pirates; but there were also a good many just and legitimate proprietors who thought there might be some way discovered of roasting the pig short of burning the house down, and who disliked giving up an institution of two centuries' existence. The quarrel raged with all the personality and virulence characterizing family differences, when everybody knows just where everybody else's shoe pinches; but in the end the reformers carried the day, the sheep were killed or exported, the Shearing Feast was unhonored, the moors became yet lonelier than their wont, and Mia-

comet Plain and the Washing Pond retained only the ticks still abundantly pervading that favored locality to remind one of the gay scenes so long enacted there. A large source of profit was thus cut off from the island; for, as one of its best men quaintly remarks to-day, "Just let me graze as many sheep as I like on the commons, and I 'll take care of Robert." A small compensation is found in the fact that the flora of the island, which remained in strict abeyance under the close cropping of the sheep, has since their removal started into wonderful profusion and brilliancy, — many flowers before unknown blossoming abundantly, and many others formerly only found in certain localities and limited supply, now rioting fearlessly on every side. Probably the visitors who seem to consider the island as their own freehold prefer the present condition of things, only regretting that the sheep did not carry away the ticks as well as the wool.

One of the charms of Nantucket is her old people: a large party of octogenarians might be gathered, and a very fair company of those who have counted their ninetieth birthday. To sit quietly down with one or more of these old

people, and beguile them into telling their experiences, especially when one flatly contradicted another, and thus evolved little details and corroborative circumstances, was one of Mysie's dear delights; and she will for the rest of her life luxuriate in the consciousness of knowing a great deal more than she means to tell about Nantucket. "Don't spoil a story to save a friend" is one of the basest of maxims if seriously taken; and every guest is more or less bound over to secrecy, if the repeating of what he sees and hears would wound the tenderest susceptibilities. That this rule should so often have been disregarded, even by such writers as Dickens, Trollope, Bremer, and some of more recent date and less note, is a disgrace to the guild of authors, and shall not be continued in this instance. So, although like Scheherezade, Mysie knows far more wonderful things than yet have been told, honor forbids her to mention them except in a very limited fashion.

Here for instance is a story told all over the world, although true only of Captain Barnard of Nantucket, who, after standing all the insolence he could from the profane officer of a craft trying to crowd him out of his place at the

wharf, stepped to the hatchway and called to his less scrupulous mate: "Obed! I say, Obed! just step on deck, will thee, and use some of thy unadvised language to this blasphemer!"

A similar story is told of another Quaker captain afflicted with a profane mate, who frequently complained that his usefulness was impaired by the restrictions laid upon his tongue by the master. On one occasion, the schooner commanded by this scrupulous yet shrewd Friend arrived in port at low tide, and so deeply loaded that she could not come up to the wharf for some hours. In this emergency the mate proposed to the "old man" that they should go ashore and report themselves at their respective homes, promising to come down himself and move the schooner at the proper time.

"Thee 'll want some one to help thee get up the anchor, Zimri," said the captain, "for boy Samwel is not strong enough. Thee 'd better get Nathan Folger, and take care that thee does n't let slip any folly before him."

"I 'll get a fellow that won't look sideways at anything I 'm o' mind to say," replied Zimri, confidently, and the captain walked away without another word. About the middle of the

night, when the young flood was two or three hours old, he left his house and quietly walked down to the foot of Straight Wharf, where, ensconced behind a pile of lumber, he could see and hear all that went on. The night was calm and still, but rather dark, for there was no moon; and although the schooner was plainly visible, the captain could not make out how many men were working the capstan, whose creaking was mingled with violent expostulations in Zimri's voice, of so oddly profane a nature that the master's chastened lips could hardly restrain a smile, — perhaps did not.

The language, unhappily, is not of a nature to be written down, whereby the reader loses a good deal of enlightenment upon the curiosities of profanity; but it mainly consisted in exhortations to more vigorous effort in heaving the windlass, mingled with reflections upon the parentage, nationality, and moral character of the person addressed. The captain listened to this for a while, and then began to wonder why the other party made no response, although Zimri often seemed to catch up his words as, "Heaving all you can, d' y' say, you —— etc! Then —— poor is your best, and y 'd better run home to your mammy, till you 've set some muscle."

"Now, if Zimri has got that withy boy Samwel, and is making him do man's work and listen to profane words, verily I shall be righteously indignant," murmured the captain, straining his eyes through the darkness. "Whoever it is, he should henceforth be called Moses," continued he, presently. "For truly only the meekest among men could patiently endure such remarks, especially as concerning his mother."

But now the anchor was apeak, a piece of the mainsail hoisted, and the schooner came floating slowly up to the wharf. The captain shrinking closer within the shadow peered curiously out, resolved to know what man so meek, or boy so unlucky, Zimri had found for his assistant, and framing various reproofs to be administered upon the morrow. The mainsail fell, the decks were apparent, the schooner rounded gracefully to the wharf, just grazing the piles without rubbing, and Zimri hastily running forward to secure her nose to his favorite post, audibly exclaimed: "There, Zimri Starbuck, you 've got her in all by yourself; and your feelin's aint hurt a mite by all the cussin' and swearin' you 've stood, be they, old man?"

Yes, he had done it all by himself; and the

terrible abuse and profanity were only the safety valve of the extra steam put on for the occasion. The captain rubbed his eyes, and softly pursed his lips as if to whistle in making this discovery, but never asked Zimri how he had got the schooner to the wharf; nor did he in future listen too attentively when any very hard job was in process with the mate in command.

During a slight illness at Nantucket, Mysie enjoyed the ministrations of an old nurse, whose reminiscences, personal, ancestral, and social, were most amusing. In her parlor hung a portrait painted in France, of considerable merit in itself, and depicting the merry yet resolute countenance of her ancestor Captain Kelly, — a commander famed in Revolutionary annals for his audacity and contempt of odds. One story told by his descendant, with so much *verve* and fire that one felt the same blood indeed coursed in her veins, was how, during the Revolutionary war, Kelly, in a swift, light-draught schooner, arrived off Nantucket deeply loaded with provisions, seed-corn, and other necessaries of life, all desperately needed by the islanders, whose few possible ports were so rigorously blockaded by an English frigate that a threatened famine

was upon them. Kelly knew his enemy right well, and knew too that in an open encounter one broadside would sink his little schooner, consign him and his men to a foreign prison, and snatch from the very grasp of his townsmen the food of which they stood so sorely in need.

These considerations made him prudent, although nothing could make him timid; and he accordingly fetched so large a compass in approaching the island that he made out the position of the frigate some time before she discovered him, and was able to keep out of sight until, wind and tide both favoring him, he suddenly clapped on all sail, put the little racing schooner upon her best point, and audaciously slipped up and past the frigate, which, like a man in controversy with a woman, did not get ready to reply to this impertinence until the occasion had passed. As soon as she could get round to it, however, she started in pursuit, and presently hailed Kelly to lay to and surrender, or he would be sunk. Kelly made no reply except an extra pull on the sheets fore and aft, and an anxious look over the side at the rapidly shoaling water. The breathless watchers in town had by this time caught sight of the chase, and word was carried from house to house, —

"Kelly 's coming into harbor with every rag of canvas set, and the British after him like — Hail Columbia!"

Fancy how the "walks" on the house-tops were crowded, and how men with frowning faces, and women with hungry children and empty larders, watched that chase, and how Kelly's own people held their breath, for it was life and death for them. It is the fashion to say that we live faster than our ancestors, but not many of us have known so vivid an hour as that. Well, the frigate fired, but the shot flew harmlessly over the low decks of the schooner; and now she had reached the bar, and not six feet of water lay between her keel and the sand. She was safe from actual capture, and almost out of range of the limited artillery of those days; and then Kelly, drawing breath and taking his eyes from the sails, ordered his own one gun fired, not in any hope of mischief, but in pure bravado and rejoicing, — very much as a Bantam cockerel, who has driven an astonished mastiff out of the barnyard, mounts the nearest rail and crows loud and long. So Kelly fired, and loaded and fired again, until he reached the wharf; or as near as he could come,

and his townsmen replied to his salvo with bravoes as exultant. But already the frigate's boats were pulling with might and main to cut out the schooner before she should anchor; and, failing in that, hallooed an angry demand that schooner, cargo, and men should be immediately surrendered and towed out as a lawful prize to the British crown.

The precise terms in which this demand was answered are not recorded, but it is feared they were neither polite nor kind. At all events the frigate did not insist, and the schooner was unladen in a marvellously short space of time, and Nantucket celebrated her victory with an abundant supper.

The old people have also much to tell of the peculiar social relations existing in their day among the girls and boys.

School friendships were not then what they became later, for school was no very important part of life in those days, both girls and boys being expected to take their share of the labors of life much earlier than now. The boys, many of them, were put to learn the cooper's trade as a sort of general preparation for a whaler's life, and at about fifteen or sixteen years of age

generally made their first voyage as "boy" before the mast of one of the many whalers then crowding the bay. The girls meantime helped their mothers in the house, and learned to spin, weave, knit, and sew, as well as to attend in the absence of their fathers and brothers to many outside duties. Sets of these young people, drawn together by neighborhood or social ties, combined in what they called "gangs," each little society keeping very much within itself, and meeting every evening for whatever fun might be suggested. In summer these meetings were in the streets, on the wharves, or anywhere out of doors, but in the winter a warm fireside was desirable. As the presence of elders was not an object, it became quite important to discover whose mother was going out to spend the evening; and one can easily imagine how often an indulgent matron would find it convenient to take her knitting and run in to neighbor So-and-so's for a chat, leaving the kitchen bright and warm for the "gang," who hardly waited for her back to be turned before they filled the place with the laughter, songs, and merry gibes forming the usual intercourse among these vigorous young sea-folk. On one

occasion the "gang" to which the narrator belonged was in despair: nobody's mother was going out. The evening was cold and stormy, and the girls were threatening to return home, when as all stood huddled together at Hammatt's Corner, the usual rendezvous, a meek and overgrown lad, not one of their company, came lounging past, and Hannah Gar'ner whispered to Pelatiah Coleman, —

"There 's Jacob Mayo! He was casting sheep's eyes at my cousin Lovicy last First day. Now if he 'd go see her to-night, her mother would make a fire in the fore-room and sit there with 'em for a while before she went to bed."

"Hannah, thee 'd ought to command a three-decker," exclaimed Pelatiah, admiringly; and following Jacob with elaborate carelessness he inquired what that young patriarch proposed doing with himself. Jacob did not know, and Machiavel then suggested, —

"Lovicy Gar'ner 's at home to-night, and she sets store by thee, — any fool may see it. Why don't thee go and sit up with her?"

"Does thee think she likes me, Pelatiah?" demanded Jacob, much flattered. "Why, then, I think I 'll go."

Heartily applauding this decision, Pelatiah walked along with his victim, the "gang" following at a discreet distance, until they had seen him pull the string which in those days raised the latch of every house-door in Nantucket, and then they huddled about the window to peep and listen. Lovicy, a pretty girl somewhat older than the "gang," sat demurely knitting beside the fire, while her mother, great round spectacles on nose, patched her boy's trousers at the table. Jacob, looking rather foolish, was seated between the two, gazing into the fire and twiddling his thumbs. Presently the mother, mindful of the etiquette demanded by the occasion, cleared her throat, and said, —

"Lovicy, thee'd better light the fire in the fore-room and take thy company in there. It's all laid, thee knows."

The "gang" outside poked each other, the girls cramming their shawls and the boys their fists into their mouths to suppress a roar of laughter, while Lovicy, meek and silent but very red, did as she was bid, disappearing for a few moments and then returning with, —

"Will thee walk into the fore-room, mother and Jacob?"

Jacob rose at once, but the mother paused and looked meditatively at the fire.

"If she rakes it out!" — muttered Pelatiah.

But Hannah calmly responded, "Then we 'll rake it in again."

But the fire was well burned down, and so little likely to snap that the prudent housewife was content to leave it to burn out, and presently followed the "company" into the fore-room, to give his visit the sanction of her presence for a short time and then retire.

Hardly was the door closed behind her, when the latch of the outside kitchen door was silently raised and the "gang" crept in on tiptoe, their broad smiles alone manifesting their satisfaction at the success of their strategy. Still in silence the fire was replenished, and gathering close about it the young marauders began a whispered chat, or, as it was universally called, a "gam," which after a while evoked so many stifled bursts of laughter that they, or the snapping of the fire, reached the ears of the mistress, who suddenly opening the door of the fore-room exclaimed, —

"Well, of all the impudence!"

But a chorus of gay apologies and petitions

for hospitality drowned her voice, and the "gang" finished their evening with the usual innocent hilarity.

On another occasion, two girls of this same gang were strolling aimlessly about in the twilight, and found a stray hen roosting upon a fence. A small demon of mischief suggested that this waif might be regarded as public property, and become lawful salvage to the first finder. Skilfully seizing poor biddy by the legs, Sally suggested, —

"Say, Betty, let 's carry this hin up to Becky's and have a hin-chowder. She and I 'll make it, and you go round and find some of the gang to come and eat it."

Betty agreed; and Sally muffling the "hin's" head in her shawl, sped along the lanes until the two stood outside the window of Becky's abode and peeped in at the kitchen window. There sat Becky by the fire to be sure, but near her sat Reuben Hussey, a grave and sedate youth, who was understood to be preparing for the ministry, and was rather an object of awe to the revellers of Becky's company, although she herself was evidently inclined to feel honored by his attentions.

"There's Reuben Hussey," whispered Betty, "and he'll spoil all our fun. Let's give it up, Sally."

But Sally was of bolder mettle, and, without waiting for argument, opened the door and walked in, the hen under her arm. "Well, Becky," began she, "I'm glad you hadn't gone on a cruise, for we've got a hin; and we're going to make hin-chowder, and get some of the girls and boys to come and help eat it."

"That's right!" exclaimed Becky, with sparkling eyes. But Reuben interposed with the austere question, —

"Where did the hen come from?"

"A fence," replied Sally, boldly.

"Whose fence?" continued the incipient elder.

"Indeed, then, how should I know, Reuben Hussey? It's round Seth Chase's lot; but whether it's Seth's fence or the town's fence I can't tell. Hadn't you better step down and find out, while we make the chowder?"

But Reuben was not to be put off with any impertinent subterfuge like this, and having satisfied himself that the hen was stolen, delivered such a scathing rebuke to the two culprits, with a sort of codicil addressed to his betrothed, that

she subsided with tears and begged the girls to take themselves and the "hin" away and leave her in peace. Considerably discomfited by this reception, although Sally retorted upon Reuben with a fair show of success, the two girls turned away from Becky's house and walked slowly back toward Seth Chase's lot; but as they passed a little tumble-down hut where a dim light showed habitation, Sally stopped and whispered, —

"I don't care a hake's head for Reub Hussey, and I won't carry the old hin a step further. I'm going to give it to old Granny Murdoch. She can cook it or she can keep it, as she's o' mind to; but here goes."

So saying the wild girl crept up to the door, softly raised the latch and peeped in. Granny Murdoch with her paralytic old husband sat crouching over a little fire, feebly gossiping away their evening, and never noticing the opened door; until Sally with a suggestive crow flung the hen high into the air, whence it descended with the peculiarly musical outcry of a frightened fowl, while Sally and Betty rushed away in the darkness.

These somewhat dubious amusements and gatherings continued with each successive "gang"

of young folks until the boys were old enough to go to sea; and when on his second or third voyage a young man sailed as harpooner (or, as it was generally styled, harpoon*eer*), he almost always carried with him the promise of one of his early playmates to become his wife as soon as he could claim a second-mate's berth, and a "lay," — that is, a proportion of the profits of the voyage. The promised wives of these absent lovers naturally became more sedate than the unbroken "gang" of the earlier years, and their meetings were devoted more to the comparing of the spinning and weaving achieved toward the trousseau, or talking over the latest news from the Pacific, or some new recipe for cookery, or at worst to secret expeditions to the wigwams of the old Indian fortune-tellers then extant, but who after a while fell into serious disgrace and trouble with the town authorities, who did not wish a repetition of the Salem witchcraft trials upon their island.

But all this order of things underwent a rapid and total change in the decay of the whale fisheries, about 1848. The men and lads of Nantucket sought voyages from foreign ports, and in many instances married and raised their

families there as well. California absorbed a great many, and the war, as has before been told, drew away almost all that was left of the young manhood of Nantucket. The girls no longer found admirers or husbands among their own kindred, for the intermarriages of two centuries had made the whole island cousins, and it had become necessary to specify an individual as "Paul's Hannah," or "Zimri's Ned," the family names being so universal as to convey no distinction of persons. The choice seemed to be to establish a new community, like St. Ursula's eleven thousand virgins, or to abrogate the unwritten law which had, since the settlement of the island, forbidden a high-caste Nantucket maiden to marry a coof, no matter how respectable. The Nantucket maidens chose the latter alternative, — that is, generally, although some appear to prefer St. Ursula; but very many find homes upon "the continent," and carry their sound health, cheerful spirits, and clear minds to vivify the torpid blood of more luxurious circles.

Already the old things have passed away from this whilom peculiar place, and the older people find no consolation in the renewal of material prosperity brought by the summer

visitor to Nantucket. Like the impoverished noblesse of the Faubourg, they make no open opposition to the Empire and its wealth, — they will even treat it with civility, but never, never with cordiality!

One of the most remarkable interviews granted to Mysie was with the last survivor of the "Essex," that famous whale-ship which in 1819 was wrecked by the vengeance of a whale,— the Von Winklereid of his people, since he sacrificed his own life to avenge its wrongs. The old man told his story in the subdued and monotonous tones of age, looking back at its incidents across an interval of sixty years filled with events almost as absorbing; yet told it with such accuracy of detail and such personal reminiscence throughout, that one seemed to stand beside him on the deck and watch that strange sea-fight, — see the monster rise, view the ship with his "wicked little eye," and then make straight for her quarter, dealing a blow that stove in planks and ribs as if they had been an egg-shell.

The skeleton of the story is, that the "Essex" cruising in the South Sea sent out her boats to attack a school of whales; each boat selected one, as is the custom, and were widely

separated, when a monstrous whale, not himself an object of pursuit, suddenly turned upon one of the boats and demolished it with a single blow. Leaving the wreck and the struggling sailors, most of whom managed to keep afloat until the other boats came up and rescued them, the whale made for the ship, where the narrator, then a boy, remained on deck; after striking his first blow, he dived, and came up again almost under the bow. "If I 'd only had a lance, and time to get my wits about me, I could have given it him right in the eye. I 've always been sorry that I had n't," said the old man, a spark of the ancient fire gleaming from his own eyes and his right hand clenching nervously. But it was only a "might have been," and the whale, sweeping round with a great curve to get a good offing, came down again upon the other bow of the devoted ship, crushing in the side and killing himself with that last terrific blow. The boats, already returning, reached the ship in time to save some little provision and other articles before she sank, leaving her crew of twenty men crowded into two little boats, with no proper means of navigation, with very slight provision, and at an unknown distance from land.

The details of that voyage are too terrible to be lightly named; it lasted for three months, and included two thousand miles of space. One after another of the men died, of exposure, of starvation and of its direst resource, until at the last, when even the boy, who with the tough elasticity of healthy young life had endured while men in the prime of life died, had so far lost his senses that he could not clearly remember the incidents of his rescue, they drifted across the track of the only vessel they had seen, were taken aboard, and nursed back to life with that tenderness so sure to be found among sailors, and indeed among most other brave and simple men under such circumstances. Eight of the twenty survived that three months' terror, and in course of time came home to Nantucket, where they had long been mourned as dead. But the experience had left its mark, and they never were the same men again; the captain especially, although he lived for many years, went about as a man who carries a secret burden which cannot be revealed. He never spoke of the wreck of the "Essex" himself, and if others did in his presence he always rose and left the company. And in fact this feeling

was shared to some extent by every one of the survivors, — even this the last of all, who seldom vouchsafes, they say, so much of a story as this which he gave most kindly to the stranger, who felt more sympathy for the ineffaceable suffering he so modestly narrated than she liked to show.

But to repeat one tithe of all the merry, sad, or wonderful stories Nantucket can tell if she will, is impossible in this place, and we may as well stop here at once. Many have tried to conserve these legends in various forms, and with varying success; for it is very difficult, even though one set down the exact words of the narration (and this would be in itself a breach of confidence), to inspire them with that piquant flavor of personal experience, or that keen relish of ancestral association which animates a true Nantucket "yarn" from the lips of a Nantucket narrator. After all, like the most luscious of fruits, or the most suggestive of wines, or the ideal of teas, they must be enjoyed where they are grown, for they will not endure transportation without such loss as deprives them of their value; and stay-at-home travellers must be content to know that such things are, and that in some happy future they too may enjoy them.

SCRAP III.

THE LIFE-SAVING STATION.

ABOUT the middle of November a tremendous easterly storm, with enough southing in it to bring the surf in splendidly all along the South Shore, raged for two or three days, and in the end of it some kind friends proposed to take Mysie over to see the breakers. Dionis, as has been said, had retired to nurse her asthma and her temper in the engine-house for six months or so, and the island had comfortably returned to its time-honored modes of conveyance, represented on this occasion by Deacon Folger's spirited brown horse, a nice carry-all, and plenty of robes, — for already the air upon the moors had all the savage nip of December in its teeth, and the best armor wherewith to meet it might be the wadded suits of the poor Aztecs at whose battle array of "polka jackets" one sadly smiles, remembering the end. The wind blew rough yet merry defiance, and

the sun gleamed out as it could from the wild scurry of clouds driven about by Æolus very much as a wicked dog drives a flock of sheep; the good brown horse pricked up his ears and whinnied appreciation of the fun, the carriage rocked and bounded across the frozen ruts, the three women laughed and chattered, and the one man instructed and corrected them in manly wont: altogether it was a very pleasant time both in passing, and in memory.

The Life-saving Station is a place of mystery and speculation to the summer visitor, who never sees it inhabited or in use, such persons as choose to wreck themselves in summer being attended to by volunteer life-preservers; but it was now open, and quite ready to save as many lives under as difficult circumstances as could be devised. The party in the carry-all considered their lives, or at any rate their heads, in danger from cold and high wind, and so drove boldly up to the door, tied and blanketed the brown horse, and unpacked themselves. During this process the door opened, and a good-natured giant standing upon the threshold gazed silently upon the invaders.

"May we come in and warm ourselves a

little?" asked the most daring of the women, their escort being obscured by the tossing head of the horse.

"Why, cer–tainly you may! Come right in!" replied the giant, evidently considering the query to convey doubt of the Station's hospitality. Coming right in, the party found themselves in a cheery sort of place, evidently kitchen and parlor and hall in one. A cooking-stove stood in the middle of the room, and a suggestive odor of coffee and something of a fried nature hung about the walls, inducing Mysie to think affectionately of tea-time and blue-fish in the near distance. Five or six men out of the eight belonging to the place were seated about the room, and all rising with the almost invariable courtesy of American men to women brought forward their chairs, made up the fire, suggested that the ladies should put their feet in the oven, and finally slid out of the door in an accidental sort of way, leaving one very pleasant and intelligent man to do the honors of the place, and another who after a pause calmly went on with his domestic labors, too much of a man to be ashamed of doing woman's work when required.

While enjoying the warmth and rest, the visi-

tors gleaned from their host some interesting details of the life here. A hard one he did not deny, and a monotonous one, and yet not without its attractions to a hardy man whose interests and associations are all of the sea. The day-duties are not laborious, consisting only of keeping the apparatus in perfect order and readiness for immediate use, and in maintaining that cleanliness and tidiness quite characteristic of the dwellings of men without women, — as ships, light-houses, barracks, and prisons. There is never much grace or daintiness in these places to be sure, but they are usually wonderfully clean, and, as the English say, "done up."

But at sunset the life-saving station-men's real duty begins. Two start out in opposite directions and patrol the beach for a distance of three miles, looking and listening for signals of distress at sea or any possibly shipwrecked mariner on shore; returning to the house, this pair of patrols is relieved by another, and they by a third, — so that for a distance of six miles along that dangerous coast there are two men upon the beach from sunset to sunrise, all vigilance and courage for whatever danger may appear. Sometimes of course this is no hard

ship, except the loss of sleep; but sometimes again it is a close hand-to-hand tussle with such cold and storm and blinding snow as have conquered many a man strong and brave as these. Sometimes the wind sweeping along the beach gathers up the frosty sand and hurls it in the face of the struggling man so violently and continuously as to cut through the skin and draw blood; often he must close his eyes lest they be blinded, and sometimes turn his back for a moment lest he be suffocated: one thing he must not do and never does, and that is to desert his post, or fail to accomplish his beat.

"A man should be well paid for work like that," remarked the gentleman of the party.

"We have four hundred dollars and our keep," replied the guard, quietly. Mysie thought of men she knows who receive two and three thousand dollars per annum from Government for coiling and uncoiling red tape in luxurious offices for a few hours in the middle of the day, and felt an enormous respect for this brave, uncomplaining, ill-paid man. At sunrise the patrol duty is over, and until sunset is substituted by a look-out man in the "walk" at the

top of the house. With a glass he can from his elevated station sweep a wider expanse of ocean than a boat could reach, and it is not necessary to be "on deck" every moment; so this part of the duty is not very uncomfortable, although Mysie and her friends were satisfied with quite a brief inspection of this airy locality. From the "walk," the steep stairway descends into the dormitory, where the eight men enjoy their broken slumbers, and where are stored cables, life-lines, signals, and other paraphernalia of the service. Among other things Mysie was interested in a board bearing an inscription on both sides, the one in French, the other in English, directing whoever should read it how to manage the cable to which this board would be attached, by means of a smaller line which was to be shot out over the wreck from one of the mortars below stairs. Of course, viewing the matter argumentatively, a French mariner would be more likely to read French than any other language with ease; and yet the instinct of an Anglo-Saxon is to wonder that a man in peril of his life should pause to attend to polite literature! Another objection to the board arose in Mysie's mind, and she uttered it aloud: —

"Suppose the wreck were a German vessel, as so many of your wrecks have been, and nobody on board could read either English or French?"

"That would be bad," replied the guard, contemplating the bit of plank seriously on both sides. "It's a pity it has n't three sides to it; but that's hardly to be expected."

Going downstairs again, the visitors passed from the living room into the largest and most important room of the house, fitted with wide rolling doors looking upon the sea, — for here are arranged in perfect order and readiness the life-boats on their carriages, the mortar for shooting a line across a wreck, cables, coils of rope, two or three kinds of life-cars and slings fitted to traverse a hempen bridge from the wreck to the shore, rockets and blue-lights for signals, in fact everything that philanthropic science and ingenuity have invented for this service. It was a beautiful and hopeful sight in all its details, — the eight powerful and quiet men, the sturdy house with its firm hold upon that wind-lashed headland, and the complete yet simple paraphernalia of their duty. Nor do these preparations at all come into the list of charming possibilities never reduced to certainty, by which the present

inventive century is overloaded. The records of Nantucket make mention of something over five hundred wrecks upon her stormy coasts, and indeed a careful circumnavigation of the island shows her surrounded by the bleaching bones of her slain, even as the fair palaces of the ogres of our childhood's lore were at once a temptation and a warning to the prince-errant. Very few of these wrecks, however, have suffered unaided, and although hundreds of lives have been lost, hundreds more have been saved, and often at greatest peril to the rescuers, who have more than once or twice laid down their own lives for their brothers. This is a large and most thrilling history, and well worthy the research of various classes of students; for here are combined history, romance, the study of noble human nature, and of that nobler, superhuman nature, wherein man by self-sacrifice becomes united in Christ to God.

These stories cannot here be repeated, but beside the living and generally too modest actors in these scenes there are several records, such as "A List of the Wrecks around Nantucket," by A. H. Gardner, and a brief chapter in Godfrey's "Nantucket Guide," an excellent little

résumé of the history and attractions of the island, published in 1882, besides Obed Macy's "History of Nantucket," a somewhat antiquated but careful and reliable work not yet superseded by anything newer.

Mr. Godfrey prints in his "Guide" a letter from Captain John Niven, of the ship "Earl of Eglinton," wrecked off Tom Never's Head in 1846, giving a minute account of the catastrophe, and almost incomparable for its simple eloquence, modest bravery, and wonderful realism; after reading it one really tastes the salt upon one's lips, and feels exhausted with the fearful struggle. One sentence is so quaint that it shall be quoted: "The last person," and this was the captain himself, although he does not say it, "coming on the running bowline nearly lost his life, the sling parting and dropping him in the surf. But one gentleman added another to his humane attributes by perilling his life to save that of another; so that finally, more dead than alive, and with reason for the time taking a recess, the half-drowned man was landed."

The hero who thus offered his life to save that of a stranger, — and if "gentleman" means the highest development of man, let us call him gen-

tleman, — was Captain Matthew Crosby, since gone to his reward, with this deed but one of many similar glittering upon his record. "Every one loves a lover," may be; but, oh, every one exults in a hero, and is proud of the common tie of humanity!

After this, the little party went down upon the sands to watch the surf, really wonderful in its height and force, while the whole sea beyond was white with the tossing manes of the war-horses; and out on the Rips the spray leaped up and fell again in a cataract of splendor, as the sun gleaming out between angry black clouds shot his arrows through and through the falling prisms, and nearer at hand burnished the concave of each arching breaker with a golden sheen too dazzling to contemplate.

What a pity such pictures can never be copied upon canvas!

SCRAP IV.

SCONSET FROM THE INSIDE. — WHALES AND CAMELS.

THE wind which produced such sublime effects of sea and sky scenery also brought in the cod, and news came from Sconset that the fishing had begun. Now was the time for that reality of Sconset which Mysie had vainly sought under the superincumbent mass of Summer Visitor, and she accordingly petitioned her friends to take her over to Sconset and drop her there, quite irrespective of their own ideas of advisability and comfort. They complied; and again the brown horse and the carry-all of furs and femininity rattled and rocked across the frozen moors, and driving into Sconset drew up near the pump, which makes the centre of the town. "First tableau of the Deserted Village," remarked one of the party drearily; but Mysie saw the beginning of the fulfilment of her dream, and exulted in spirit.

"Not a flounce, or a furbelow, or a seaside costume, or a yachting dress, or anything got up for marine effect, — not even a bathing-house, or awning, or hammock to be seen!" exclaimed she blithely; "actually the plank walk across the sands is taken up, and the bathing-line has disappeared!"

"I should so remark!" replied the masculine element of the group. "Not many people would care to venture into that surf, especially in this temperature."

"Nobody, I should think," replied Mysie with much satisfaction. "Now the next thing is to find me a shelter."

It is a poor rule that won't work both ways, and the winter rule of Sconset is a very good rule, and it does work both ways, as Mysie now discovered; for while in summer two large hotels and nearly all the cottages of the hamlet are offered to the public not only willingly but eagerly, in the winter it is all but impossible for an unfortunate coof to find shelter or welcome. The hotels are closed, the families who took boarders have either gone "to town" for their own recreation, or are resting from their labors and annoyances, and loathe the face of a summer visitor; the

fishermen who let their cottages during the hot weather have now resumed them, and wish for no intrusion on their privacy; the private cottages belonging to down-town aristocrats are closed, and although one might be borrowed in the time-honored neighborly fashion of Nantucket, it is not a thing to be done in a moment. The applications at house after house met with but one answer, "No," variously expressed, but however softly always immovably. One charming old patriarch, evidently moved to pity by Mysie's forlorn appearance, thought his daughter might consent to receive her, and pending the daughter's return from town showed her the quaint and most attractive interior of his cottage; but when the daughter returned it was to repeat the village refrain of No, no, no! adding with some asperity, that she should have supposed her father would have known better than to encourage any such idea. The patriarch, rather dashed, here suggested a possible refuge; and the daughter seizing upon this as a happy escape added her hearty recommendation. So, with rather a drooping crest, for really this was the very last hope left in Sconset, Mysie, followed by her merry friends, who had all along prophesied that she would

have to go back to town discomfited, knocked at the side-door of a large house built by one of the magnates of the whaling era for a country villa, and now the property of the most purely representative Nantucket man left on the island. The door was opened by a fair-faced, kindly woman, who, after hearing the stereotyped request for a few days' hospitality, considered the applicant in meditative silence for a moment, and then said pleasantly: "Why, yes, you can stay, if you want to; it don't seem just right that any one should go away and say there was n't a single house in Sconset where they could get a night's lodging."

Chanting pæans of triumph in her heart, Mysie received her bag from the carriage, bade good-by to her companions, and entering the house begged leave to sit beside the kitchen stove while her hostess prepared the evening meal, and discoursed most pleasantly upon Sconset life and experiences. An island woman of the Folger stock, and married to a Coffin, she had passed most of her life at Sconset, and was certainly one of the best possible exponents of its character. From her Mysie learned that a few families, not more than half-a-dozen gener-

ally, consider Sconset their settled home, winter and summer, and cultivate among themselves those neighborhood interests, amusements, and kindly services which are so much stronger in small communities than in large ones. Was it very lonely in the depths of winter? Oh, no, there was seldom weather when the women could not run over to each other's houses, and somebody or other would go down town two or three times a week and get the newspapers and the letters, if there were any; and there was always plenty of work to do, and some reading and music and games of one sort and another, so it was n't lonesome. A school-mistress is provided by the town, and a little flock of girls and boys of all ages is gathered in the weather-beaten school-house, whose one room also serves as church, lecture-hall, and concert-room when such rare diversions as lecture or concert are offered to Sconset. There is no resident minister, any more than doctor or lawyer; so religious services are rare and promiscuous during the winter, and Sconset folk seem beautifully resigned to the deprivation. The want of a lawyer has probably been still less felt, — Mysie herself, as will be shown, being the only person on record

who felt it a necessity to reach one without delay; and as for a doctor, when Sconset people wish to die they have to go down town, disease and decay fleeing from the strong salt breeze, active exercise, and "early bed" pervading Sconset. However, there are occasions when a doctor is considered desirable; and one old lady told Mysie a most picturesque story of her husband's setting out in the fury of a northeast storm in the depth of winter and of night, to fetch a doctor. She tied down his hat herself with a big bandanna handkerchief, and she saw that his great-coat was buttoned and his good yarn mittens upon his hands; but for all that, it was with a quaking heart that she heard him drive away, even the old horse rebelling against such an expedition. The goodman soon lost the road, and this was before the modern landmarks had been established; so the old horse and he bumped about upon the moors a pretty while, only knowing they were in a road when the increased bumping suggested ruts, until at last after several hours the sailor catching sight of Brant Point Light, and having Sankaty Light on his weather beam, steered his way into town and arrived there quite independently of any

other man's course. The gray dawn helped the return voyage, but by the time the doctor arrived the invalid had been so much benefited by kindly neighbors as not to need his services.

Darkness fell long before Mysie had exhausted her companion's fund of information, the lamps were lighted, and Mamie — a shy, sweet child of ten breezy summers — came in, and at once made friends with her future godmother, who found her a most useful little guide and companion in the ensuing days.

Then came the cosey tea-time, and then Mysie, relegated to the sitting-room, made the acquaintance of her host, — a Coffin of the pure blood; a strong shoot from the hardy old Nantucket stock of fearless, powerful, and modest men, who have left their heroic record in every quarter of the world.

From him she heard many marvellous tales of wreck and storm upon this southern shore, — adventures "all of which he saw, and much of which he was," and yet told in the quiet and reserved fashion of a man who would fain give the story fully, and yet suppress his own share of it.

Among these tales was one of the great

steamship "City of Glasgow," which after a stormy passage ran short of coal, and lying to off Sconset sent a boat ashore requesting a supply of a hundred tons. Naturally Sconset is not provided with a coal-yard, as no vessel that could possibly do anything else would think of demanding coal there; but the "City of Glasgow," requiring ten tons even to start a fire under her boilers, had no choice but to lie there until the ten tons could be furnished. To complicate the matter, this was just the period of one of the heaviest falls of snow recorded of Nantucket, and the seven-and-a-half miles between Sconset and town were buried in drifts ten and twelve feet deep. This in a sledging country would not have mattered, but Nantucket travels on wheels, seldom having occasion for runners, and the hundred tons of coal demanded had to be carted from town. The first thing, therefore, was to dig down to *terra firma* and make a road, and this was done rapidly and well; then the procession of little carts began, and the hundred tons of coal were in due time at the edge of the surf. But the "City of Glasgow" lay almost a mile outside, and barges stanch enough to reach her drew too much water to

come within several rods of the shore; so the coal must be taken off to them in the little fishing-boats and dories which slide so deftly up the beach, but which hold so small a cargo. Thus the shipping of the hundred tons was not the least part of the work, and the men worked waist-deep in the icy water, and thought less of it than other men do of dampening their feet. At last all was aboard, the captain of the "Glasgow" paid the price of his coal, with ten dollars per ton for teaming, and went his way to New York, a sadder and a wiser man.

After this there were Californian experiences to tell, and some stories of the war and other adventures, until Mysie felt a mental indigestion coming on, and, as her hostess advised, took an early bed, and slept the sleep of the hardy explorer.

Early the next morning, with Mamie as companion and guide, she went down to the beach to see the fishing-boats start off. The season had not opened well, and many of the fishermen did not think it worth while to go out; but there were some twelve or fifteen boats drawn up at the water's edge, their noses pointed seaward, their sharp, narrow frames promising speed,

their deep keels stanchness, their tackle and bait ready at hand, their crews of one or two men grimly cheerful in the prospect of four or five hours of cold, wet, and the horrible roll of a boat anchored or lying-to in a heavy sea. The boats off, Mysie turned to watch a sort of Triton gathering kelp and loading it into a one-wheeled conveyance very like a cart-body mounted upon a flour-barrel, — a wheel certainly better adapted for a soft, sandy beach than the ordinary make.

Some children with baskets came scurrying down before the wind like a flock of sand-peeps, and began to pick up the carrageen lying abundantly along the beach. "Unlimited blanc-mange! 'I would not live alway' in Sconset," remarked Mysie, confidentially to herself; but the little maids evidently did not share her aversion to this innocent comestible, for they were comparing notes of how much each one could and did eat at a sitting whenever the opportunity occurred.

Walking briskly across the beach and up through the village, — for spite of heavy ulster and many wraps the cold was very cruel, — Mysie found her host, and gained much information

about the fishing. The spring fishing-season comprises April and May; the autumn, November and part of December, and varies in profit year by year. The one or two men who man each boat expect in a "decently good time" to take from ten or fifteen up to a hundred or even more fish, — cod if possible, hake and haddock as a second choice. On one occasion three men brought in six hundred fish, and it was necessary that every one should be cleaned and salted before morning; the men worked all night until, as the narrator said, he went to sleep standing at his bench, — but the work was done, and well done.

There is a prejudice in the fastidious yet unenlightened mind against salt codfish as an article of diet. Mysie confesses to having lived under the shadow of this prejudice, and is not pleased when her friends in other cities mention codfish as Boston's usual diet; but she hereby confesses that there is codfish *and* codfish, and that Sconset codfish properly cooked are a very different article from what one encounters in our rural districts for instance, or sometimes in a city boarding-house.

These Sconset fish are a most elaborate con-

fection, and worthily command a higher price at wholesale than the ordinary "Banks" fish at minutest retail.

The former are no sooner brought ashore than they are taken to the fish-houses, — odorous temples at the head of the beach, — and are at once split, cleaned, and deprived of half their backbone to facilitate a more rapid drying; they are then washed through two waters, the black skin of the nape taken off, when they are salted and piled in a kench, heads and tails. This kench is a peculiarly shaped pile of fish upon a platform elevated a foot or so from the ground. Here they remain from four to eight days to drain off what is called the "bitter water," or natural juices of the fish. Each fish is then well scrubbed on both sides with a brush, and if the sun is bright they are laid out upon the fish-flakes to dry for a day; next they are piled in kench for another day, and so go through an alternation of flakes and kench until they take on a certain mealy or floury appearance, when they are fit to store in a dry place and become the *ne plus ultra* of their kind.

The ordinary salt codfish prepared by the Cape Cod fishermen are caught upon the Banks

from schooners fitted out for the purpose. The fish as soon as caught are split, cleaned, and thrown into the hold, where they are piled upon forms and salted, one tier after another, until the hold is full. The schooners are often out for weeks, and the condition of the lower layers of fish need not be enlarged upon. Arrived in port, the fish are pitched into a car alongside, and scrubbed promiscuously with a broom; they are then pitchforked ashore and dried in a stack.

But, alas! how is the fish-ball consumer ever to know if his codfish was a Banker or a Sconseter!

After dinner, in pursuance of her determination to know the Sconset people, Mysie made some calls, — one upon a cheery old whaling-captain who showed her the picture of his former vessel, with all the pride of a fond mother showing the portrait of "the most remarkable child, as everybody says, that they have ever seen." The adventures connected with this vessel were even more interesting than itself; and the old captain, at Mysie's request, went through the whole process of capturing a whale, from the "There she spouts!" of the lookout man in the crow's-nest, to the cutting

in the blubber and trying out the oil. There is a popular tradition that whale-men in the dearth of fresh meat at sea are fond of eating the brown morsels or "scraps" of the blubber after the oil has been thoroughly extracted; and hence their jealous neighbors and rivals, the Cape-Coders, gave them the name of Nantucket "Scrap-eaters," or Nantucket "Scraps,"[1] — an appellation answering to "Yankee," or "Hoosier," or "Buckeye," or any of the rest of those playful nicknames by which Uncle Sam's big boys love to tease each other, all in love and good-will. Some of the Nantucketers deny the taste for this luxury, and, if one may quote from a popular author, "deny the allegation and scorn the allegator;" but others confess it, — and one frank and genial gentleman, not now resident upon the island, assured Mysie that he with the other school-boys of his day thought it a great treat to provide themselves with plenty of sea-biscuit, and going down to the try-works when some good fresh blubber had been brought ashore, beg the scraps as they were skimmed out. "Yes, indeed, many 's the good lunch I 've made

[1] The intelligent reader may hereby gain a new conception of the title of this humble work.

that way! I wish I had the appetite and the digestion for it now," said the señor, sadly, as he finished the story.

From the captain's, Mysie went to see an aged couple, claiming to be, with one exception, the oldest permanent residents of Sconset. The husband, a sailor from his boyhood, had seen and made intelligent acquaintance with the scenes and the dangers of almost every quarter of the globe. He talked freely, and gave a vivid account of his boyish longings for the sea, sternly repressed by his father, who wanted his services on the meagre farm they cultivated here at Sconset.

At length one day, as he and his father were cutting peat in a deep bog-hole, the boy's desire took the form of a resolution; and without any explanation of his intentions he clambered out of the hole, struck straight out across the moors for town, and finding a whaler just ready to sail went to the office and enrolled himself as "boy," coloring the story of his leaving home to suit the taste of the owners. So soon as his name was down he went aboard, and with a boy's far-seeing wisdom considered the thing finished. The father coming home to supper and finding

Valentine missing, was at no loss to conjecture what had become of him, and next morning arrived on the scene of action. Like a sensible man, however, he concluded that what was to be, might as well be sooner as later, and proceeded to supply the runaway with a "kit" and all those comforts and even necessities of which he had not thought. The father's parting words partook, however, more of paternal sternness than maternal tenderness.

"You 've had your way, young fellow, and you 're bound off; you won't be sorry but once. Good luck t' y'."

"And were you sorry?" asked Mysie, breathlessly, hoping he would say *never;* but slowly shaking his head, the old man replied, —

"I rather guess I was, ma'am; and it begun before I was out of sight of land, and it lasted till I reached old Nantucket again, — a matter of three years. I don't suppose a boy ever goes to sea, especially in a whaler, but what he *is* sorry; and mighty few would ever go the second time, only they daresn't stay at home for fear of getting laughed at. Once in a while there has been one that give up after the first voyage, but I was always sorry for 'em. Folks never let 'em forget it."

"'The world's dread laugh,'" murmured Mysie, and the old wife sitting by, remarked, —

"That's like the old song we used to sing when I was a girl: 'Don't think you 're at your ease, my boys.'"

"What is that? Won't you sing it for me?" asked Mysie; but the old lady laughed and shook her head, —

"My singing days are over as well as my dancing days; but I might tell you a few of the verses, maybe."

"Do, and let me write them down," exclaimed Mysie, delighted; and with many pauses for memory and many consultations with the smiling husband the dame repeated these lines, graphic enough in their way, and very popular, as she said, with the girls and boys of her especial "gang" in her youth: —

"Come all young men, both far and near,
That sail the briny seas:
When you 're on board of a whaling ship
Don't think you 're at your ease, my boys,
Don't think you 're at your ease.

"When first you leave your native shore
You spread a crowd of sail,
Clear off your decks, one man aloft
To look out for sperm-whale, my boys,
To look out for sperm-whale.

"The Western Islands first you make:
If you 've any luck meanwhile,
You 'll get a whale off the Cape de Verdes
Will make your owners smile, my boys,
Will make your owners smile.

"We cross the Line and pass the Banks
Where the winds blow high and low,
To double Cape Horn where there 's many a storm
And many a bitter blow, my boys,
And many a bitter blow.

"'One man aloft,' our captain cries,
'To keep a sharp look-out!
Look all around on every side
For breaches, hump, or spout, my boys,
For breaches, hump, or spout!'

"'There she blows!' is the cry from our mast-head,
And it is a pleasant sound;
'There 's a large sperm-whale off our lee-beam,
And to wind'ard she is bound, my boys,
To wind'ard she is bound.'

"'Lower away your boats!' next is the cry,
'Your davy-falls let go!
Shove astarn! Shove astarn!
Ship out your oars,
And down to the whale we 'll go, my boys,
And down to the whale we 'll go!'

"And here we are 'long-side the whale,
The bold harpoonēēr stands by,
He darts his craft, and fastens well:
Then, 'Starn all!' is the cry, my boys,
Then, 'Starn all!' is the cry.

"Our whale she starts, and to lu'ard runs,
And after her we go.
'Haul the line! Haul the line, now, every man!
We 'll give her her death-blow, my boys,
We 'll give her her death-blow!'"

But here, unfortunately, the memory of the *raconteuse* failed, and she could only recall fragmentary lines, describing the mortal plunge of the lance, the whale's death-agony, the towing alongside, and the cutting in the blubber. Perhaps it is as well not to have these verses, since few persons not positively connected with the matter could find much pleasure in contemplating the painful death of any creature, or would be able to take a proper interest in the oleaginous "blanket" enveloping the poor dead thing, its removal and trying out. The old sailor in his turn gave a graphic account of opening the well of spermaceti in the head of the sperm-whale, and ladling out the contents in buckets, the drippings from which hardened as they fell upon the bulwarks or deck into the snow-white flakes familiar to those who æsthetically prefer candle-light to cleanliness.

But some of us have read all we wish of these things, both in the text-books we unwillingly

pondered in childhood and in the marine tales we eagerly devoured in adolescence, and we will perfume the subject with a little ambergris. What fragrant and delicate associations arise as one speaks or hears that word! Keats, Porphyro, and St. Agnes Eve; recollections of the "Arabian Nights," sultanas, odalisques, everything heavily oriental; dim, magnificent cathedrals, the heavy white clouds of incense rolling out and enveloping the worshippers, and floating to the frescoed roof, — all this and more, a great deal more. Just say "ambergris" two or three times, shut your eyes, and, like the Marchioness with her punch, "make believe very hard," and you will see what delicious delusions arise to your brain!

Well, a sensible, plain-spoken, most interesting gentleman down town, among much other valuable information, told Mysie precisely what ambergris is, where it is found, and its *raison d'être.* She is not a very sensible or plain-spoken person herself; she is fond of her own delusions, and has a tender respect for those of other persons. So she will not repeat her information, and does not advise her readers to ferret it out, but to content themselves with learning, that,

about the year 1859, the schooner "Watchman" captured among the West India islands a small and emaciated sperm-whale, yielding only six barrels of black oil, but by way of compensation presenting his captors with a lump of ambergris weighing two hundred and fifty pounds. Only one hundred pounds of this was fully matured, but the mass was bought by a well-known druggist's firm of Boston for the pretty little sum of ten thousand and twenty-five dollars; and Mysie's informant, who was one of the fortunate owners of the "Watchman," remarked that he was as much surprised at learning the value of ambergris as anybody else could ever be, and that to his mind it was the vilest stuff he ever handled.

Some other interesting details of the whaling epoch were gathered, partly orally and partly from a printed list of all the whale-ships ever sailing out of Nantucket; and as a little history of many of them was added to the vessel's name and statistics, this book was like the dictionary, "very good reading, except the pieces were rather short."

The first whalers, as we are informed, not only in this catalogue but in everything everybody

has written about Nantucket, were boats rowing out from shore whenever the men on one of the look-out stations along the beach "observed a whale," — and in those days the poor confiding whales were in the habit of gambolling all along shore, one big one even coming into harbor, where he was at once killed and cut up in the most hospitable manner. These whales were generally, however, only black-fish or right-whales, the more aristocratic sperm keeping his state in the seclusion of mid-ocean.

The first official notice of the whaling interest is the mention in the town records of June 5, 1672, of an agreement with "James Loper, who doth Ingage to carry on a design of whale citching in the Island of Nantuckket. That is, the said James Ingages to be a third in all respeckes; and some of the Town Ingage also to Carrey on the other two thirds with him in like manner." There is, however, no subsequent intimation that James Loper came to Nantucket, or that any further official action was taken in the "whale citching" business until 1672, when Nantucket, finding her immemorial rival Cape Cod excelling her in this art, bestirred herself, and, sending thither, employed Ichabod Paddock to

remove to the island and open a class in high-art whaling.

The sperm-whale fishery, like Elia's roast pig, was discovered by accident: a dead one was thrown upon the beach, and the thrifty islanders securing and cutting it up were astounded at the treasure the gods had cast upon their shore. Soon after, Christopher Hussey, while cruising in the vicinity of the island in search of right-whale, was blown off shore, and with the luck of his great namesake discovered an Eldorado for his countrymen, — not a continent to be sure, but a floating island, an archipelago in fact, for he fell in with a school of sperm-whale, captured one and brought it home.

And now see, if you please, the progress of luxury and the insatiable greed of the human heart! Nantucket, which had with joy and pride "citched" her right-whales off-shore by means of row-boats, and only asked a full supply of the same, now scorned this meaner game, and proceeded to build vessels fit for deep-sea fishing, and send them to look for sperm-whale. These first craft were of thirty or forty tons burden, and only supplied for a six-weeks' cruise, — their method being to capture a single whale, cut up

his blubber, stow it in casks, and bring it ashore, when the owners took it in charge and tried it out, while the little vessel went after another whale. In 1715 six sloops were thus employed, and in 1730 the fleet had increased to twenty-five vessels of from thirty-eight to fifty tons burden, which together secured some 3,700 barrels of oil. In 1745 the first shipment of oil from Nantucket to England was made; and in 1783 the ship "Bedford," Captain Mooers, laden with 487 barrels of oil, unfurled the spic-and-span new Stars and Stripes upon the waters of the Thames, being the first American vessel hoisting United States colors in a British port. But our English cousins take a little more time to adapt themselves to new ideas than we volatile Americans do, and the "Bedford" was not allowed entry until after consultation with the Lords of Council; for although peace was declared, the red tape had got tangled round some Acts of Parliament against rebels, and had to be neatly coiled away before Captain Mooers could unload his oil, and eat a better mutton chop than even Nantucket moors could produce.

In 1791 the "Beaver," Captain Paul Worth, was fitted out at a cost of $10,212, and was

the first whale-ship to circumnavigate Cape Horn.

In 1819 the ill-fated "Essex," Captain Pollard, was stove and wrecked by a whale. The story has been previously given. Also, in 1819, the "Hero," Captain James Russell, arrived home after two years' absence with 1,070 barrels of sperm and 63 barrels of right-whale oil. She had been captured off the Island of St. Mary by a pirate named Beneveder, who took her to Aranco, where Captain Russell and a boy were shot. Seeing in this the prophecy of their own fate, the mate, Obed Starbuck, with some of the crew, contrived to slip aboard, recaptured the vessel with her cargo, and sailed her out of Aranco under Beneveder's very nose, bringing her triumphantly home.

In 1820 the "Dauphin," Captain Zimri Coffin (Murphy, third mate), sailed September 4 and arrived home July, 1823, with 1,272 barrels of oil. Her adventures, minutely and truthfully logged by the third mate in a metrical history, which may be called the Odyssey of Nantucket, shall presently be given *verbatim et literatim*.

In 1822 the "Globe" sailed out of Nantucket. A month later the crew, headed by Sam Com-

stock a boat-steerer, mutinied, and killed their officers; they then carried the ship to the Mulgrave Islands, and stripped her of sails, provisions, and stores, but in the ordinary course of things quarrelled among themselves, hung one of the company, and shot Comstock their leader. At this, Comstock's younger brother George, a boy of seventeen, entered into league with Gilbert Smith a boat-steerer, and five more of the crew, to escape from their companions and the less formidable savages with whom they were associated. They seized the ship before their design was suspected, sailed her off, and finally arrived safely at Valparaiso. Here they found a United States squadron under command of Commodore Hull, who dispatched Lieutenant Percival, in command of the schooner "Dolphin," to bring in the surviving mutineers, two in number, with the seven loyal men whom, in spite of their superior numbers, they held in subjection. The lieutenant found the place; but of the nine only two innocent men, named Hussey and Lay, remained alive. The rest had been killed by the natives. Hussey and Lay finally arrived home, and for years were heroes and objects of interest to the Island.

In 1827 the "Sarah," Captain Arthur, sailed, and arrived home in three years, lacking one month, with 3,497 barrels of sperm oil, — the largest cargo of sperm ever brought in.

In 1831 sailed the "Franklin," Captain George Prince. After a protracted cruise the captain, mates, and five men died of scurvy off Cape Horn. A boat-steerer came into command, and no doubt did his best; but not understanding navigation he stranded the "Franklin" on the coast of Brazil, where in Nantucket phrase she "laid her bones."

In 1839 the "Penn" sailed, arriving home, 1842, with 1,340 barrels of sperm. She was the first ship taken across the bar by "camels," and it was considered such an important event that the town bells were rung, guns were fired, and the population turned out *en masse* to wave and cheer, and to congratulate each other on what proved a very transitory blessing.

Now most of us *think* we know what a camel is, and probably some persons wiser than Mysie might not have found anything very ludicrous in her remarking, when told that the oil was brought to the wharves by camels, —

"I suppose, then, it was put ashore at the

Haul-over, and camels were the most suitable creatures to carry it over the sand into town. But how were they fed, and how kept alive through the winter?"

It is pleasing to know that one has been able to add to the innocent pleasure of one's fellow-mortals; and Mysie is quite sure that the merriment so painfully suppressed by the auditor of this query, burst out again as often as he repeated it during the next year, and may have wrought a permanent cure upon the dyspepsia probably affecting him, as he was an American.

But soaring above these trivial personalities we discover that the camels were two huge boxes, one hundred and thirty-five feet long, nineteen feet deep, and twenty-nine feet at the bottom; these were fitted with water-gates by which they could be filled and sunk, with steam-pumps by which they could be emptied and raised, with an engine, propeller, and rudder; the two were yoked side to side by fifteen chains passing down through the keel of one and up through the keel of the other, and long enough to allow a large vessel to lie between the two camels. Now Nantucket Bar is a delicate subject to meddle with, for Nantucket people do not like to have it said that

the "Great Eastern" could not swim across it safely, or that the steamboats sometimes hitch a little in crossing it at low water. Still, in point of fact, Nantucket found that for some reason a heavily loaded whale-ship could not comfortably sail into harbor and up to her wharf, and several whalers were actually wrecked on the bar; so that it came to be the fashion to break cargo outside and land the oil by boats. This was an expensive and tedious process; and after a little thinking over the matter, Mr. Peter F. Ewer, father of the Rev. F. C. Ewer of New York, invented the camels. His head found hands to carry out its plans in Mr. J. G. Thurber, and in course of time the camels floated unwieldily at Straight Wharf, ready for action.

The fashion of this action was deliberate and peculiar. A vessel heavy with oil arrived outside the bar and lay to; her approach having been signalled from the tower (that is, the steeple of the Unitarian Church) and from various "walks" interested in her arrival, fires were kindled under the engines of the camels, and they steamed out to her at the rate, in very smooth weather, of two miles an hour; in rough times with less celerity.

Approaching the vessel, the camels separated, lengthened their connecting chains until they hung in a loop deeper than the keel of the vessel, and crept along one on either side until they had her well within their embrace; the water-gates were then opened, the camels were filled to their utmost capacity (exactly as the Bedouins fill their camels to *their* utmost capacity before a journey), and, being full, sunk below the surface of the water. The chains were now "hove taut" by means of thirty windlasses, and the steam-pumps set at work throwing out the water at the rate of thirty barrels per minute; the lightened camels rose; the ship, hugged tight between them and supported by the fifteen chains, rose also; and when the operation was completed, ship, camels, and all did not draw over five feet of water, — and propelled by the camel's engines and a steam-tug, floated majestically into harbor and up to the very wharf.

But the camels proved themselves an expensive economy; and when in the course of five or six years they needed extensive repairs, the owners did not think it profitable to make them, especially as the whaling business began to de-

cline, and the camels went to decay and "laid their bones" in the dock. A model of the camels, with a ship in their clasp, is to be seen in the Nantucket Museum.

In 1854 the "Manchester," Capt. Alex. Coffin, sailed, and was soon after lost on the coast of Patagonia. She struck about fifty miles from land; the captain's wife and most of the crew were drowned, but the captain, his son, and a few sailors reached shore, where all except young Coffin and one man were immediately massacred by the natives, who were thought to be cannibals. The son alone reached Nantucket to tell one of the last and most terrible tales of the whaling epoch. After this the record grows sad and sterile. Ships had to be fitted at great expense for very remote and protracted voyages; owners grew despondent, and captains' wives discontented, until in 1859 the "Three Brothers" was absent five years and three months, only bringing home at the end of that time nine hundred and twenty-five barrels of sperm and two hundred and fifty of whale oil. Contrasted with such a voyage as that of the "Sarah" in 1827, this was very disheartening, and owners began to think it best to dispose of their vessels, pocket their

losses, and try to supply the deficit in some other way.

Finally, we come upon the record in 1869: "'Oak.' Last Nantucket whaler." *Requiescat in pace!*

Several detached notices possess a great deal of suggestion if not much detail, as, —

"'Niphon,' sunk at sea very suddenly; her planking bored through by worms."

"Captain Brown died in his boat while fast to a whale."

"First whale ever taken in Pacific Ocean killed by a Nantucket man acting as mate of an English whaler."

"Eleven whale-ships owned by R. and J. Mitchell previous to 1800."

"No whaler sailed from Nantucket in 1863."

"Captain William Keene, commanding the 'Christopher Mitchell,' made the Bay of Islands, where his officers, boat-steerers, and nearly all his crew left the ship."

One cannot but wonder here if Captain Keene had always been polite and affectionate to his "officers, boat-steerers, and nearly all his crew," or if perhaps some little unpleasantness had arisen, making them willing to part from him for a brief season. But the "old man" was not without resources; for he found Captain William Swain

willing to take the position of chief mate on board the "Christopher Mitchell," and among the loungers at the Bay of Islands they made up a sort of "scratch" crew and pursued the voyage. Whale were sighted, and Mr. Swain's boat struck the first one, when Swain himself was carried out of the boat and lost. Probably the captain could not sail the ship without an officer, and perhaps the men began to feel superstitious fears about craft and captain; at any rate, they "put away for home" with three hundred barrels of oil.

From these few crumbs and scraps one sees what a mine of wild adventure, exciting sport, and records of endurance, daring, and determination the history of Nantucket whalers and whalemen contains.

Of course, these stories lose much in being transplanted from their home, and nobody can tell them as the old men to whom they are personal experiences. The judicious seeker after such treasures will find all and more than Mysie did if he goes to Nantucket; and those who prefer "A Journey Around my Bedroom" may construct something satisfactory from the "specimen bricks" here presented.

Let us close the whaling chapter with Mr. Murphy's most interesting rhythmical log of the "Cruise of the Dauphin," published many years ago in pamphlet form, and now out of print:

A JOURNAL OF A WHALING VOYAGE,

ON BOARD SHIP "DAUPHIN," OF NANTUCKET.

COMPOSED BY CHARLES MURPHY, THIRD MATE ON THE VOYAGE.

The ship "Dauphin" sailed Sept. 4, 1820, from Nantucket. The following are the officers: Zimri Coffin, of Nantucket, Master; Reuben Kelley, of Nantucket, First Mate; George Brock, of Nantucket, Second Mate; Charles Murphy, of Nantucket, Third Mate; Joseph Hussey, of Nantucket, and Levi Snow, of Mattapoisett, Boat-steerers.

September fourth, on Monday morn,
The weather fine and clear,
We weighed our anchor to the bow,
And eastward we did steer.

Blessed with a sweet and pleasant gale,
From west-southwest it blew,
Success attend the "Dauphin"
And all her jovial crew!

Unto the girls we bid adieu
Left on our native shore,
And likewise unto all our friends,
For two long years or more.

'T was one-and-twenty men we had
This voyage to pursue,
And a sperm-whaling we were bound
On Chili and Peru.

Then over the shoals our course we bent,
Where billows loudly roar,
The ship "States" left the bar with us,
Our company she bore.

September the one-and-twentieth day,
The "States" in company,
About two points off our lee bow
A large sperm-whale did lie.

We made all sail and stood away,
It being pleasant weather;
Our captains thought it best to heave
Our chances all together.

"Lower down your boats and after her!"
Our captain then he cried,
And very soon we had him dead,
And towed him alongside.

The body eighty barrels made;
The head it then did sink, —
'T was an unlucky circumstance,
A rare one too, I think.

October the fourth in the afternoon
We Flores Isle did raise,
From Nantucket our passage there
Was only thirty days.

Unto the southward then we steered
For Boa Vista's Isle,
In hopes before we saw that land
To get some more sperm oil.

October on the nineteenth day,
Quite early in the morn,
Then Boa Vista's barren isle
We plainly did discern.

We hauled our wind and braced up sharp
And stood in for a while,
Determined to go in that port
And there send home our oil.

The wind increased and hauled ahead
At twelve o'clock that day, —
Hard-up the helm and squared away
And steered for the Isle of May.

The forenoon on the twentieth day
We in the harbor went, —
There was a brig for Portland bound,
And letters there we sent.

Her captain could not take our oil,
So for St. Jago bore ;
At two o'clock arrivèd there,
And sent a boat on shore.

At sunset then the boat returned ;
All sail was quickly made,
And to the southward then we steered
With a strong northeast trade.

The twenty-first, both ships hove to,
Lying on the larboard tack ;
Our oil we got from out the " States,"
And empty casks sent back.

November the ninth, that day we passed
The equinoctial line ;
And then we took the southeast trades
With weather clear and fine.

Unto the southward still we steered,
And naught did us molest ;
We weathered Cape St. Augustine
And then steered south-southwest.

When we got up in twenty-nine,
The " States " got out of sight,
And then we took a furious gale,
At twelve o'clock that night.

Clewed up and furlèd every sail
Soon as it did begin,
Got down the three topgallant yards,
And boats we hoisted in.

Three days it blew excessive hard,
We all that time lay to ;
The wind then to the northward hauled,
And our course we did pursue.

Then for the Brazil Banks we steered,
And crowded every sail,
And kept a sharp look-out to get
Another large sperm-whale.

December eighth green water had,
And then we tried for ground;
We hove aback, let run the lead,
And fifty fathoms found.

Hard-up the helm and squared the yards,
And steered for Staten Land, —
December, on the fifteenth day,
We saw the rocky strand.

At three o'clock in the afternoon
Southwest by south it bore,
By calculation, we were then
Fifteen miles from the shore.

December on the nineteenth day,
Just off the weather beam,
A ship a-running down for us
Was plainly to be seen.

She ran across our stern and hailed, —
The "States" it proved to be;
And then we made more sail to keep
Each other company.

Unto the windward then we steered,
The weather quite severe,
But weathered all in twenty days,
And down the coast did steer.

When we got down in forty-five,
A gale blew on the shore;
The "States" got fairly out of sight,
And we saw her no more.

In eighteen hundred twenty-one,
In the month of January,
The four-and-twentieth day, I think,
We saw the Isle St. Mary.

Then we wore ship and stood off shore,
A shoal of sperm-whales saw;
We lowered our boats, got fast to one,
And very soon did draw.

The whales to windward then they went,
We after them did row:
'T was blowing fresh, the chance was small, —
On board the boats did go.

The one-and-twentieth of the month,
Another shoal espied;
We lowered, and soon got fast to two,
And took them alongside.

Next morning then we cut them in,
And then began to boil;
And both together only made
A tun and a half of oil.

The second month, quite early on
The three-and-twentieth day,
From our mast-head we did espy
A boat to leeward lay.

Hard-up the helm, and down we went
To see who it might be, —
The "Essex" boat we found it was,
Been ninety days at sea.[1]

[1] See account of wreck of the "Essex," on page 258–61.

No victuals were there in the boat
Of any sort or kind,
And two survivors, who did expect
A watery grave to find.

The rest belonging to the boat —
Ah, shocking to relate ! —
For want of food and nourishment
Met an unhappy fate.

We rounded to, and hove aback ;
A boat was quickly lowered, —
We took the two survivors out,
And carried them on board.

At sunrise, on the third of March,
We then did plainly see
A shoal of spermaceti whales
Lie spouting off our lee.

We hard-a-weather and ran down,
Two boats we lowered away ;
And two of them we took 'longside
At ten o'clock that day.

Then just at night we saw some more, —
Good luck, I do declare !
We got a forty-barrel bull,
And had a noble fare.

Same day, while cutting in our whale,
About the hour of three,
The ship " Two Brothers " then we spoke,
And kept her company.

We cruised together, off and on,
Till March, the thirteenth day;
Our two survivors went on board, —
Next morn they bore away.

To Valparaiso they were bound,
Provisions for to buy;
Cruise one more month, and then they were
Bound home immediately.

'T was on the nineteenth day of March,
For port we bore away;
And into Valparaiso went
The three-and-twentieth day.

Nine days we lay at anchor there;
Potatoes we did buy;
Of apples, pears, and Cape-Horn nuts
We got a full supply.

The water where we anchored, here
In this extensive bay,
Was five-and-twenty fathoms deep, —
The bottom mud and clay.

The harbor here is all exposed
Unto a northern gale,
And in the winter season
They always do prevail.

The southern breeze begins to blow
In the latter part o' the day,
And then ships lying in this port
May safe at anchor lay.

When you are bound into this port,
Upon your starboard hand
You 'll see a rock just off the point,
But forty rods from land.

The water round is very deep ;
Your ship may wafted be
As near the rock that 's off the point,
Her length from danger free.

The first of April we set sail,
And left the Spanish shore;
With a good breeze we stood to sea
To try our luck once more.

April the one-and-twentieth day
We saw the " States " once more;
And then together we did mate
As we had done before.

And on the four-and-twentieth day,
Just at the fall of night,
The " Lima," " Falcon," and the " Charles,"
Did plain appear in sight.

By them we got some later news
Than we had heard before,
And all the drifts [1] about the girls
From Newtown to North Shore.

And early on the following day
Our helm we hard-a-weather,
To drop a little lower down, —
The "States" and us together.

[1] Rumors.

We steerèd north, and northwest,
Until the first of May,
Then hauled our wind and cruisèd off
The mouth of Tonga Bay.

And there we cruised a little while,
In hope to get some whales,
Spoke the "Meteor" and the "Ark,"
And several other sails.

The weather rough and whales scarce,
We stopped a week or two;
And then broke mate-ship with the "States"
And bore up for Peru.

We cruised the coast of Chili o'er
And cruised it round about,
And cruised it up and cruised it down,
And cruised the season out.

And all the time that we were there
Upon the rugged coast,
Ten tuns of oil or thereabouts
Was all that we could boast.

'T was in the latter part of June,
The five-and-twentieth day,
Then three large whales ahead of us
Spouting there did lay.

We quickly lowered down our boats,
And for them pulled away;
And one old sog we took 'longside
At twelve o'clock that day.

Our latitude observed that day
Was sixteen, twenty-four ;
And we were plain in sight of land,
But ten leagues from the shore.

And on the ninth day of July, —
'T was blowing mackerel gales,—
Another shoal we then did raise
Of spermaceti whales.

And on the purlieus of the shoal
We plainly did espy
A noble seventy-barrel whale, —
She spouting there did lie.

We lowered the waist and starboard boats,
And having extra luck
We rowed just right, when she came up,
And soon went on and struck.

At three o'clock we had her dead ;
To tow we did begin ;
At five we had her safe 'longside,
Next day we cut her in.

We cruised three months in sixteen south,
'T was rugged all the while,
And there we got but fifteen tuns,
Of spermaceti oil.

And on the eighth of August, we
Up helm and bore away,
Ran down in twelve, and there we spoke
The "Ruby," Captain Ray.

When we spoke him 't was blowing
Strong trades and heavy gales,
And he told us that he had seen
Unnumbered shoals of whales.

But rugged as the weather was,
'T was best to take a view;
Again we hauled upon the wind,
To try and see some, too.

Two weeks we cruised, and spoke some ships,
The "Lima," "Ark," and others;
We found the whales there wild and scarce,
Then mated with the "Brothers."

Then we hard-up, and squared the yards,
For Payta we were bound;
Stood off northwest, and then northeast,
To have a look around.

When we got down as far as five,
Again we hauled our wind,
We cruisèd there for several days,
But nothing could we find.

Then into Payta we did go,
And if rightly I remember,
We cast our anchor off the town
The twelfth day of September.

Ten days at anchor in this port
Our good ship then did lie,
As we scraped and blacked the bends,
And some recruits[1] did buy.

[1] Fresh provisions.

But vegetation[1] was so scarce,
And everything so high,
We were obliged to go to sea
Without a full supply.

Here is no dreary reef of rocks,
And here no shoal of sand
That will obstruct the pilot's course,
Along the sea-beat strand.

The sea-breeze here begins to blow
Late in the afternoon,
For here the breezes always are
Influenced by the moon.

At full and change the breeze is strong
For two or three hours or so;
In other phases of the moon
Then lightly they do blow.

The hills that do surround this place
Are all quite barren ground;
There 's not a shrub, or plant, or tree
For several miles around.

The barren hills are ever dry,
For here no welcome rain
Descends from the ethereal clouds,
To greet the parchèd plain.

The houses here are built of logs,
The boards are split bamboo,
The roofs are thatched all o'er with straw,
And reeds and rushes too.

[1] Vegetables.

The logs are driven in the ground,
Which serves for every stud,
The split bamboo to them is tied,
And plastered round with mud.

The ground it serves them for a floor,
Which is composed of clay;
A platform covered with a mat
Serves for a place to lay.

The furniture does there consist
Of a table and a chair;
The better sort a sofa have, —
But that is very rare.

For knives and forks, they have to use
Fingers at any rate,
And four or five all sitting round
Will eat out of one plate.

Just in the middle of the room
Is hung up by a string
A cot, for ease and pleasure,
Where one may sit and swing.

The one-and-twentieth of the month,
'T was fine and pleasant weather;
The "Dauphin" and the "Brothers" weighed,
And stood to sea together.

When we had been at sea six days,
Cruising off and on,
We saw a noble shoal of whales
Quite early in the morn.

Our waist and larboard boats
Were from their stations lowered;
We chased the shoal till we were tired,
And then returned on board.

But ere the sun was fairly down,
Some more whales hove in sight;
We lowered, and soon got fast to one,
And had him dead by night.

Three days from that we saw some more,
To the windward of us lay;
We lowered our boats, got fast to two,
At six o'clock that day.

And when we had them all stowed down,
And into our ground tier,
We made all sail upon the ship, —
For Tumber we did steer.

October on the seventh day,
'T was Sunday, you must know,
Abreast of Tumber River we
Our anchor did let go.

We furled our sails and moored our ship,
And lay a day or two,
Before we could some water get,
Or anything could do.

At length the bar became more smooth,
For water we did go;
Three hundred barrels we got off,
And stowed it all below.

The river where we water got
Is beautiful and fine;
Five leagues in length this river runs,
Crooked and serpentine.

Upon the margin of this stream,
How lovely it did seem!
The sturdy trees their branches bend,
And dip the silver stream.

The warbling birds from spray to spray
Do swell their tuneful throats,
And make the lofty woods resound
With their melodious notes.

On either side the waving flags
In wild profusion grow;
Through these some gently murmuring rills
Incessantly do flow.

And here upon the fertile banks,
With ease and plenty crowned,
The farmer with his offspring lives,
And tills the peaceful ground.

His rustic cot composed of reeds,
Though neither fine nor gay,
Shelters him from the nightly dews,
And scorching sun by day.

For here no drenching rains descend,
Nor furious gales appear,
But gentle breezes fan the plain
The whole revolving year.

Here cocoanut and orange trees
Do rear their lofty head,
And through the pure delightful air
Their balmy incense spread.

Here plantain and banana trees
Upon the banks are seen ;
In stately rows they all do stand,
With grassy walks between.

And here beneath their spreading limbs,
Upon the ground reclined,
The patient ox, when freed from toil,
A grateful respite finds.

Some vegetation here we got,
And also got some fruit,
And with oysters, flags, and wood and poles
Made up a good recruit.

And having got all things on board,
We weighed and stood to sea,
With a fine breeze from north-northeast,
The " Brothers " in company.

And now 't was time to leave the coast ;
The season had come round
When we must to the westward steer,
And take the Off-Shore ground.

Accordingly we steerèd west,
Left the adjacent shore, —
Cape Blanco, distant thirty leagues,
And east-southeast it bore.

When we got off in the longitude
Of one hundred nine and eight,
Our captains then they thought it best
No longer for to mate.

So we our partnership dissolved,
Each different courses took,
In hopes by that to bring about
Some little better luck.

But dire misfortune's powerful hand
Had marked us for her own,
And not one mite of odds it made
Whether mated or alone.

In eighteen hundred twenty-two,
'T was on the New Year's day,
A large sperm-whale we did espy,
To the leeward of us lay.

Then all three boats were quickly lowered,
And for him rowed away ;
We took this noble prize 'longside
At five o'clock that day.

That served to cheer our spirits up,
In hopes that through the year
Good luck would still continue on,
And better days appear.

We cruised upon the Off-Shore ground
About four months I ween ;
Fine weather all the time we had,
As any we had seen.

But the season being far advanced,
And few whales to be found,
Our captain thought it best to go
Upon the northern ground.

'T was then we mated with the "Hope," —
From Boston she did hail;
We steered off west and north-northwest,
In hopes to find some whales.

A week from that or thereabouts,
Our captains did agree,
The bark "Eliza" of New York
To take in company.

We to the northward bent our way,
With northeast trades and clear,
And for the Sandwich Islands then
All three of us did steer.

'T was on the thirteenth day of March,
Quite early in the morn,
The Island of Mani ahead
We plainly did discern.

The wind it proving very light
In the latter part of the day,
At sunset we all hove aback,
And there all night did lay.

Our little whaling squadron then
A cloud of sails did spread,
And west-northwest we all did steer,
To clear the northern head.

At daylight on the fifteenth day,
We all three hard-a-weather,
And round the western point we steered,
All three of us together.

At six o'clock, or thereabouts,
After a tedious tow,
The water sixteen fathoms deep,
Our anchor we let go.

And now our decks with girls were filled,
Of every sort and kind ;
And every man bought shells and beads,
The best that he could find.

Our sails were furled, our good ship moored,
And everything put to rights ;
Two weeks we here at anchor lay,
And cruised on shore of nights.

The houses here are built of poles,
Which are driven into the ground ;
Some sticks across the poles are tied,
And thatched with straw all round.

The houses are built very low;
And then so low the doors,
That when you enter in at them
You must go on all fours.

One room is all they ever have ;
The ground with mats is spread,
Which serves them for a place to sit,
And also for a bed.

The soil is very fertile here,
And where the land is low
Square places are cut in the ground,
Where beds of taro grow.

The water from the mountain is
Conveyed by various roads;
And in these taro beds it runs,
Which keeps them overflowed.

And here are pleasant walks laid out
Between the beds of taro,
Where you must walk in Indian file,
Because they are so narrow.

Here sweet potatoes, corn and yams,
In plenteous crops are found;
Here the bread-fruit trees do grace
The cultivated ground.

Here cabbage and tobacco plants
Are natured to the soil,
And melons of two different kinds
Reward the farmer's toil.

Here plantains and bananas thrive,
And cocoanuts abound,
And squashes, gourds, and sugar-cane
Adorn the fruitful ground.

April the fifth, in the afternoon,
A leading breeze it blew;
Then we got under way and bid
The Mani girls adieu.

Then for Oahu we shaped our course,
And west-by-south did steer;
The Mani mountains capped with clouds
Began to disappear.

Next morn, when Phœbus o'er the deep
Had shed his rays of light,
The Island of Oahu ahead
Did plain appear in sight.

At nine o'clock or thereabouts
We were abreast the strand,
But the wind it was a-blowing strong,
And too rugged then to land.

Accordingly we hauled our wind,
Kept lying off and on;
So we manœuvred all the night,
Until the following morn.

Then we ran in and hove aback,
The starboard boat did lower;
The captain and six other men
Repaired unto the shore.

'T was April, on the thirteenth day,
We left the friendly shore;
The "Hope" still kept our company,
And westward we did steer.

And for the Japan coast we steered,
Expecting there to find
The bosom of the briny deep
With spermaceti lined.

Then we ran down the northeast trades
For two or three weeks or more,
Until our longitude was east,
One hundred seventy-four.

Then we hauled up and steered northwest,
And shortly did arrive
North of the equinoctial line,
In thirty-four or five.

Now got upon the Japan coast, —
We every night hove to,
Our longitude then being east,
One hundred sixty-two.

And all the month of May throughout
Bad weather there we found,
And fogs, and calms, and heavy rains
Environed us all round.

'T was on the fifteenth day of June,
A heavy gale it blew ;
We parted from the "Hope,"
As we were lying to.

The weather now became more smooth
Than it had been before,
And now the ocean all around
A cheering aspect bore.

July and August, then we had
Fine weather all the while,
And those two months we did procure
Full seventy tuns of oil.

The season being far advanced,
'T was drawing near the time
To leave the northern latitude
And try a southern clime.

For the Sandwich Islands then we steered,
Some few recruits to buy,
Likewise some water to obtain,
And get a fresh supply.

October the ninth at eight P. M.
The isle of Hawaii,
Bearing south-southeast of us,
We plainly then did see.

And when the sun dispelled the mist
That gathered in the night,
Then Morotai and Mani
Did plain appear in sight.

Then we hard-up and steerèd west
Till twelve the following night, —
Left Morotai on the left,
The ocean on the right.

Then we luffed to and lay aback
Until daylight appeared,
And then again we bore away,
And west-by-south we steered.

Same day, while running before the wind,
About the hour of two,
We plain discovered, right ahead,
The island of Oahu.

Then we ran down abreast the bluff,
On the weather part of the bay,
And then kept lying off and on
Till sunrise the next day.

Then we ran in with a light breeze,
Got everything to rights,
Let go our anchor in the roads,
And lay two days and nights.

Then a pilot we received on board,
It being now our turn ;
And in the basin we did tow,
And moored her head and stern.

The graceful damsels from the shore,
As soon as we were moored,
Came paddling off in their canoes,
While others swam on board.

For here 't is the same as at Mani, —
The women are all for trade ;
Calicoes, rings, and scrimshaun work[1]
Are sought by every maid.

Oahu is in west longitude
One hundred fifty-nine,
And latitude of twenty-two,
To the northward of the line.

A fine, commodious harbor here
Presents itself to view,
Which is upon the southwest part,
And is equalled by but few.

[1] Toys carved from bone or wood by the sailors.

Our ship we well recruited here
With vegetation kind;
And at this season of the year
A plenty you will find.

December eleventh at daylight, we
Our goodly ship unmoored,
At eight A. M. or thereabouts
The pilot came on board.

Then with a fine and pleasant breeze
We soon got under way,
Stood out to sea beyond the reef,
And then we bore away.

North west-by-west we then did steer,
To clear the western head;
Then to the northward hauled our wind,
To pass the northeast trades.

And when we reached the latitude
Of thirty-one or two,
Unto the eastward then again
Our course we did pursue.

And when our longitude was west
One hundred twenty-four,
Unto the southward then we steered,
To cruise a while off shore.

December the eight and-twentieth day,
By our latitude we found
We had crossed the equinoctial line,
And gained the Off-Shore ground.

In eighteen hundred twenty-three,
First month, the thirteenth day,
Provisions growing somewhat short,
No longer could we stay.

Unto the southward then we steered,
And left the Off-Shore ground,
And hugged our wind all through the trades,
For Valparaiso bound.

When we got up in the latitude
Of twenty-three or four,
The western winds we then did take,
And steered away in shore.

The second month, the thirteenth day,
When daylight cheered the sky,
Then Masafuera, right ahead,
We plainly did espy.

Same day about the hour of ten,
If I have not forgot,
We saw a noble large sperm-whale,
Going thirty or forty knot.

We lowered our boats, took chase to him,
But finding it in vain,
We then gave o'er the fruitless toil
And went on board again.

For Masafuera then we steered,
It being now our wish
To get a new recruit of wood,
And catch a mess of fish.

Next day, we having gained the land
Sufficient nigh to lower,
Laid the maintopsail to the mast,
And sent two boats on shore.

The land is high and craggy too,
The shores are iron bound;
No harbor round the isle is seen,
No anchorage here is found.

The mountains are well stocked with goats,
Which easily are shot,
And wood and water on the beach
In plenty may be got.

The shores all round are lined with fish
Of a superior sort,
And at all times and seasons
In plenty may be caught.

The thirteenth of the month we left,
And hauled our wind in shore,
And stood for Valparaiso's port
As we had done before.

The three-and-twentieth of the month
The land appeared in sight,
We ran off Valparaiso's head,
Lay off and on all night.

At twelve o'clock the following day
We in the port did go:
The water thirty fathoms deep,
Our anchor we let go.

Three weeks we lay at anchor here,
And got a good recruit
Of apples, pears, and peaches
And other kinds of fruit.

Potatoes, cabbage, onions, here,
We in this port did buy,
And of provisions here we got
A very good supply.

And when we got our stores on board
And stowed them all below,
We quickly then got under way
And out to sea did go.

In eighteen hundred twenty-three,
March the twentieth day,
We hauled our larboard tacks aboard,
For home we put away.

Our mainmast now being somewhat weak,
We thought it best to fix it,
Lest on our passage round the cape
Some accident should dish it.

Then all our boats we hoisted in,
Our strongest sails did bend,
And all topgallant yards and masts
We down on deck did send.

And having fitted well our ship
To pass Cape Horn again,
Each man then, fore and aft the ship,
Scrimshauning did begin.

Then knitting-sheaths and jagging-knives
Were cut in every form,
And other trinkets for the girls,
As presents from Cape Horn.

April the eighth, we having run
Our latitude quite out,
Unto the eastward then we steered,
And took a pleasant route.

Fine weather and fine western gales
To us did now appear,
And as our longitude decreased,
More northward did we steer.

April the two-and-twentieth day,
The weather clear and fine,
Our latitude observed at noon
Was fifty, fifty-nine.

Our longitude then being west,
Just forty-nine and four,
'T was then due north we steered our course
For freedom's happy shore.

When we got down in thirty-two,
'T was on the fifth of May,
Four points upon our weather bow,
A large sperm-whale did lay.

Our waist and starboard quarter-boats
Were manned and lowered away,
And we obtained the noble prize
At four o'clock that day.

Then we lay by the whale all night,
Till daylight broke again,
Then called all hands, and soon began
To cut the blubber in.

And having cut her blubber in,
We then made sail again,
And still pursued our wanton course
Across the western main.

'T was on the twenty-fourth of May,
As we were steering free,
We plainly saw Cape Augustine
Four points upon our lee.

Then north-by-east we shaped our course,
Till we got fairly clear ;
And then again we kept away,
And north-northwest did steer.

The twenty-eighth we crossed the line,
And northward still we steered,
And when our latitude was four,
We took the northeast trades.

A favoring breeze attended us,
With weather clear and fine,
And on the ninth of June we reached
The northern tropic line.

The three-and-twentieth day of June
We hove aback to sound,
About the hour of ten at night,
And ninety fathoms found.

Then we ran in with a light breeze,
Stood well in off Montaug,
And there we lay four days and nights
Blockaded in the fog.

While we were lying off and on,
And drifting round about,
We spoke a little schooner boat,
And took a pilot out.

The eight-and-twentieth day of June
The foggy vapors cleared,
We bore away before the wind,
And for Nantucket steered.

The flaming orb of day had passed
Two thirds the vaulted sky,
When, lo! upon our starboard bow
Nantucket then did lie.

Same day we anchored at the bar, —
Our anxious voyage now o'er,
To see our wives, sweethearts, and friends
We hastened to the shore.

And now in harbor we 've arrived,
All hands are well and stout;
Unbend the sails and take them up,
And next the oil break out.

Our oil is sold, and cash is paid,
We 'll share it with our friends;
And when it 's gone, to sea for more, —
And so my journey ends.

SCRAP V.

VOYAGING UNDER PERILOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

TWO days passed most delightfully in this fashion, and the more so that the dear lady previously mentioned as having traditions of the beloved mother's girlhood to relate was spending a few days in her own cottage at Sconset, and was always hospitable and charming. The third evening was still and dark, and very cold, — a gloomy and reticent sort of twilight, in whose latest shadows Mysie came in from the beach, thinking contentedly of tea and afterward of a good Sconset talk with her host, who always seemed to have a new phase of interest to present, and a yet more fascinating story to relate. But hardly had she spread hands and heart before the genial fire, when Mamie appeared with a letter and news that the bearer was waiting in the kitchen. "Unhappy be the man who invented letters!" ruefully mut-

tered Mysie, foreboding disturbance to her comfortable schemes; and to be sure the letter, forwarded with great earnestness, demanded not only a reply by the early boat of next morning, but a consultation with a lawyer before replying.

No lawyer was to be had at Sconset, and the problem solved itself with beautiful mathematical certainty into the necessity of leaving pleasant fire and pleasant company and the projects for the morrow, and going straightway back to town, seeing the lawyer, posting her reply to the letter, and parting with Sconset.

Mamie was despatched to find her father, one of those cool, clear-headed men upon whose decisions women not professing to be strong-minded are apt to rest with great confidence; and after hearing the case he assented to the necessity, but shook his head at the means.

"They 've sent a little boy with the carriage," said he; "and though he 's a smart enough little chap as far as I see, it don't seem quite shipshape to send you off alone with him. Can't you wait till morning?"

"Not possibly."

"Well, then, you must go to-night, and I will go and talk with Zack a little more."

Zack was confident, as perhaps smart boys are a little too apt to be; the horse seemed steady, and Mysie was determined. So after examining every buckle of the harness, every portion of the carriage, and cautioning Zack to keep a sharp lookout ahead, mine host led the horse out of the gate, made a pretty farewell speech to his guest, and, as it were, launched the ship destined after many perils to be wrecked on Sconset moors.

The roads, like everything else at Sconset, are liberal and without any very arbitrary limits, consisting mostly of deep ruts worn through the turf into the sand and naturally deepening with every day's use. When the ruts become too deep, somebody drives out on one side or the other of them and makes a new track, in course of time superseded by another, and so on. The ultimate effect of this system is a vegetable and silicious gridiron, from one to two rods in width, along which one travels very comfortably so long as he adapts the wheels of his vehicle to its parallels; but very uncomfortably, if he tries to be independent.

Now either Zack or the horse did try to be independent, and in spite of all Mysie's remon-

strances constantly traversed the gridiron at full speed, in such fashion as threatened dislocation both of the springs of the carriage and of the articulations of the traveller's frame. Once or twice the rebound was so severe as to throw her upon her knees, or across the back of the forward seat; and on these occasions a short and lively conversation ensued between herself and Zack, who always said it was the horse's fault, and as the horse did not speak in his own defence he probably felt guilty. At last, after two or three successive crashes like those tempestuous chords by which one knows when a classic pianist is going to leave off, there came the final bewildering crash, the ultimate bang of the pianist, the end of all things for Mysie as she for a moment thought, amid the tumult of crashing wood, prancing hoofs, shouting driver, and her own lowly condition in the bottom of the carriage.

"You stop!" shouted Zack, but in so quavering a voice, that, had the horse been disposed to be disagreeable, he would at once have seen that he was master; but horses are as a general rule very magnanimous, and this one, after a few experimental plunges, stood still and whin-

nied his inquiries as to what had happened. Mysie also, feeling a certain curiosity on this point, mildly advised Zack, who was weeping, to get out and investigate. He did so, and presently announced in a quavering voice that the old "whippletry's broke, durn it all; and 't aint no fault o' mine, whatever dad says." Mysie meekly wondered if it was any fault of hers, or if perhaps the magnanimous horse could be persuaded to say it was his fault; but pending his answer to the query, she advised Zack to take him out from the shafts, get on his back, and ride back to Mr. Coffin's for help. With a good deal of trouble and some muttered remarks not well to repeat, Zack obeyed, and with the horse's patient help got him free from the broken carriage and led him to the side of it, saying,—

"You hold him, and I'll go back to Sconset afoot."

"How far is it?"

"Three mile and a half. Here's just halfway."

"But why don't you ride?"

"I daresn't. He's awful ugly, that horse is."

"He don't appear so; but I can't hold him while you walk three miles and a half and back.

You must tie him to something. Is n't this a fence that we have run into?"

"Yes, there 's a gully acrost here; and this is a kind o' causeway, and there 's a fence each side."

"Well, tie him to the fence and blanket him, and do be quick; it 's bitterly cold."

"*I*'ll be warm enough 'fore I make Sconset," muttered Zack, discontentedly; and having thrown out one of the robes for the horse's benefit, Mysie proceeded to encamp as comfortably as she might upon the carriage floor, with the other two robes and a hot brick with which Mrs. Coffin had kindly provided her.

The horse was tied, Zack departed, and the longest two hours that ever lay between eight and ten o'clock of a wintry night began to mark off their sixty seconds to each minute, — and a second is quite a tangible space of time under some circumstances. The horse, after some moments of intensely quiet meditation, evidently made up his mind that it was *not* his fault, and that his fine sense of justice was outraged by the unmerited discomfort of his position. As this idea grew upon his mind, he tossed his head so vehemently that the blanket slipped off his shoulders, and allowed the piercing moor-wind

to strike a chill to his honest heart; he neighed indignantly and switched his tail, but was unable to pick up and readjust the blanket. Mysie thought of getting out and doing it for him, but just then he began rearing and plunging about in so eccentric a fashion that she concluded he would keep warm without her help. It was so dark that nothing was distinctly visible except the stars; and a very curious effect was produced by the horse's suddenly standing on his hind legs, and seeming to sweep a whole segment of the stars out of the arc described by his huge body. He did this a good many times, until Mysie sarcastically inquired if he did n't know something funnier than that. Evidently he did; for after one or more parabolas he suddenly appeared entire against the stars, like a new constellation trying to set himself in heaven, and for a moment presented a very gorgeous appearance, his head, mane, tail, and hinder hoofs all above the horizon at once. Then he plunged over the fence into the gully; and as he went, Mysie's mind rapidly pictured him hanging to the rail and dying miserably, or lying in the gully with broken legs and dislocated shoulders until somebody came to shoot him.

Her first serious emotion arose at this picture, for she is a good deal of Dean Swift's mind about Houyhnhnms and Yahoos; but evidently there was nothing to be done in the darkness and femininity of the situation, so she only leaned out and listened with both ears, until the plunging about, click of iron shoes against wood and stone, and various ponderous sounds of crushing twigs and herbage showed that the beast was at least alive. "But of course he 's ruined, and Zack or I am responsible for his value," was the next thought. But just then, with a last mighty plunge, our india-rubber steed arose and began walking up the gully, dragging after him a portion of the top rail of the fence, to which he had been so securely tied that it had preferred to break and follow his descent rather than to release him. At the top of the gully he once again came against the stars, and as he walked composedly away, rail and all, like Samson with the weaver's beam, Mysie was relieved to see that he did not even limp. The last click of his hoofs died away as he wandered off upon the moors, and a silence succeeded so intense as to make a real experience in one's life. Not a sound from the sea, for the surf was not pour-

ing in to-night in its line of battle charge, but sliding up the sands in a sullen, brooding fashion, as if meditating a storm and some shipwrecks; not one of the hundred murmurous insect-voices of summer-time, not one hoot of an owl or the cry of a loon or the cropping of sheep, not one of the notes of life, sweet multiform life, which made the summer night-hour upon the moors so memorable. Here in the darkness, the deadly chill and the silence, life no longer seemed sweet and gracious, but terrible in its solemnity. The stars burned like points of flame, and the great red eye of the light-house on its distant headland seemed watching with benignant care over this atom of humanity which with itself represented the presence of man amid the vastness of Nature, — a light-house and a woman opposed to that awful expanse of fiery suns arching overhead, that great black expanse of moorland around, the ocean girdling the little island on every side and cutting it off from the common earth!

One does not come upon many such hours in life. But the night grew later and the cold more keen, and the bitter wind rousing from its nap began searching every crevice of the impertinent

vehicle standing in its way, and pinching and stinging the poor shivering atom cowering in its depths. Physical discomfort was beginning tyrannously to assert itself, when a "Hullo!" from out the darkness, and the swinging of a distant lantern suggested a new train of thought. If somebody cries "hullo" to you, what can you do but cry "hullo" back again? It is not elegant, it is not classical, it is not even æsthetic, but it is in a way inevitable; so Mysie cried "hullo" with fervor, and as the lantern rapidly approached added, —

"*Is* that Mr. Coffin?" so piteously, that a jovial laugh heralded the response, —

"It 's Robert Coffin sure enough, and all the trouble 's over for this time. Are you frozen or frightened, or both? And where 's the horse?"

The story was soon told, and a new dilemma arose; for supposing the broken whippletree the principal trouble, Robert had only thought of mending it, and had slipped his horse into the farm-wagon standing in the yard, as the easiest to come at of his vehicles.

The horse being gone, it was useless to mend the whippletree, since the cart-horse with his chain-harness could not be adapted to carriage-

shafts; and as the farm-wagon had neither springs nor seat, and was used for very practical purposes, our friend's natural chivalry urged the impossibility of a lady's using it. His kindly face assumed a shade of anxiety, not to say distress, as he inquired, —

"Now what will you do? Stay here while I drive home and put the horse into the carry-all, — Zack is here in the cart and could stay with you, — or could you make up your mind just for once to get into a farm-wagon and let me take you back to the house to get warmed up and have a cup of coffee or so before we start out again? I 'll go into town with you any way, so you can fix it just as you like. You 've only to say which."

"Then if you please," said Mysie, "I will get into the farm-wagon and drive straight into town; we are half way, and it is growing late, and I had rather go through."

And so, after much opposition on the part of this *preux chevalier*, the affair was arranged. A nest of carriage-robes and blankets was arranged in one corner of the cart, wherein Mysie and her faithful brick were carefully bestowed; Robert sturdily stood beside her and drove, balanc-

ing himself like a sailor as the springless cart rattled over the frozen road, while Zack, also standing and holding by one of the cart-stakes, seemed sadly and silently revolving the question, "What will dad say?"

Eleven strokes of the town-clock as the cart struck the cobbles and began to shake up its occupants in serious earnest, and a few moments later the lawyer just seeking his virtuous slumbers was summoned to the exercise of his privileges; and half an hour later Mysie bade a grateful good-night to her kind and chivalrous escort, and astonished her friends by appearing at their door. But not until almost twenty-four anxious hours had passed was the horse found quite unharmed in the remotest corner of the island.

A few more quiet days were spent in paying parting visits to certain persons and places of whom and of which Mysie had grown fond. One of these was the Athenæum, — pronounced by many of the burghers A*then*æum, — one of the principal buildings in Nantucket, and one of the most interesting. Here is the hall where "Patience" is played, and where the peripatetic lecturer delivers one of his two discourses for the current season; here also the more stately

dancing parties are held, and any other solemn assembly for which people are ready to pay a serious entrance fee. Below the hall is the Museum, where reside the jaw of a sperm-whale and several other nautical curiosities more or less interesting as one may fancy, and a custodian more interesting than the curiosities.

But the nucleus of the Athenæum is the Library, — a subscription affair, but open to visitors on payment of a small sum for the season. The hall is a very pleasant reading-room, where one may see the latest magazines and take what book one likes from the shelves, or consult dictionaries and encyclopædias without formality. Here, too, hangs an admirable picture of Abram Quary, the last Indian of Nantucket. He is represented seated in his own cabin, with a basket of berries just picked for sale, upon a table, and surrounded with the details of his homely housekeeping. Through the open window at his back one sees the harbor of Nantucket and the long reach of Coatue. The old man's face is admirable in its aboriginal dignity and pathos, and the whole composition presents one chapter of Nantucket history with marvellous suggestiveness.

The librarian is a lady whose courteous and charming manner and ready interest in her visitors adds an attraction to this pleasant retreat, too often lacking in more pretentious institutions.

And now the last days of the Nantucket visit were slipping off the thread, and the very last excursion was planned; it was a long drive, circling the eastern end of the island, taking in Quaise, Podpis, Quidnit, Sachacha Pond, and Sankaty Light-house, and so through Sconset home. It really was a long drive and a very cold one, for November was just lapsing into December, and the winter settling down. It was November 23, — St. Clement's day in the old English calendar, — and as Mysie came out to the carriage, a walking mass of wraps and preventive measures, she quoted Dr. Neele's lines: —

"It was about November-tide,
A long, long time ago,
When good St. Clement testified
The faith that now we know.
Right boldly then he said his say
Before a furious king;
And therefore on St. Clement's day
We go a-Clementing."

Deacon Folger's horse, who alone heard the

quotation, took it into solemn consideration; the rest of the party appeared, and presently a carry-all, packed entirely solid with merry humanity and manifold wraps, rolled down Orange Street and out upon the sandy road branching off to the left from the Sconset road. A real piece of woods lies along the first mile of this road, and the sea is never out of sight; so that there is always something to enjoy, in addition to the delight of rapid motion and pleasant companionship. And although two or three detached farms with much shut-up farm-houses, one school building, and a blacksmith's shop comprise all that was seen of Quaise or Podpis, it was a very delightful journey. Quidnit is a tiny hamlet at one end of Sachacha Pond, and Sachacha Pond is a sheet of fresh water only divided from the sea by a strip of sand. But fresh-water fish are here to be caught; and it used to be the fashion for Nantucket merry-makers to come out to Sachacha for picnics or squantums, or to dance in a house built for the purpose, in the days when Nantucket had both more young men and more money than now, and cherished a livelier style of society. The house is gone, the "hermit" who was a feature of Quidnit is

dead, the perch are very bony, and the whole place has a lonesome and "gone-by" look to it, — at least it had on that St. Clement's day; and Mysie was glad to get away and arrive at Sankaty, where the party unpacked themselves, sat for a while by the light-house keeper's fire with his pretty wife and baby, and then did the correct thing in mounting all the iron stairs, inspecting the Fresnel light, stepping out on the balcony, looking at the view, and pointing out to each other the familiar features of the landscape. Light-houses, however, have a good many features in common, among others a pronounced smell of oil and a certain oleaginous smoothness to the iron stairs and hand-rails; and on the whole Mysie feels that the forty or fifty light-houses she has gravely inspected have perhaps filled the measure of good she is able to derive from this source.

On again to Sconset, and a brief visit all round to her friends there, principally to the house of her late host; finally a last drive in the chilly gloaming across the moors, where the white owls were hooting ominously, and so home to a merry tea-table and a welcome bed.

A day or two later Mysie had a tempestuous

passage across the Sound, and so home to quiet comfort, enlivened by the many happy memories very imperfectly crystallized in these pages.

There is a great deal more to say about Nantucket, and Mysie quite intended saying it, — a good deal about the places, and a good deal about the people, several of whom are well known to the world in widely differing departments of art, science, literature, philanthropy, politics, and heroism. But after all there seems a certain indelicacy in setting down the names of living persons even in a *rôle d'honneur* without their consent, and the curious reader is referred to Mr. Godfrey's excellent "Nantucket Guide," where, under the head of "Distinguished Nantucketers," he will find many names with which he is already familiar, and some of which the whole world honors.

One exception may be made to this rule, however. The William Rotch there mentioned was father of Mrs. Farrar, wife of Professor Farrar of Harvard University; and some of us will remember her "Young Ladies' Book," which was the *Vade Mecum* of our girlhood, and the fascinating work of her later years called "Rec-

ollections of Seventy Years," where she speaks of her father and his connection with Nantucket and Dunkirk.

But the subject, like most worthy subjects, broadens in the study, and one may as well pause here as try to finish an endless theme. The social life of Nantucket, the peculiar phase of female character and influence here exhibited, the habits of mind and judgment coloring its opinions of the rest of the world, the educational progress, and, above all, the anomalous and transitional religious phase succeeding the expiring Quaker faith, — all these and other themes might fill many pages more, and perhaps present a deeper interest than these idle sketches of personal adventure; but space, time, and strength fail. What is written is written; and Mysie, in dropping the pen, can only advise those who would fain know more of a most interesting place and people to go and study for themselves. *Vale.*

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